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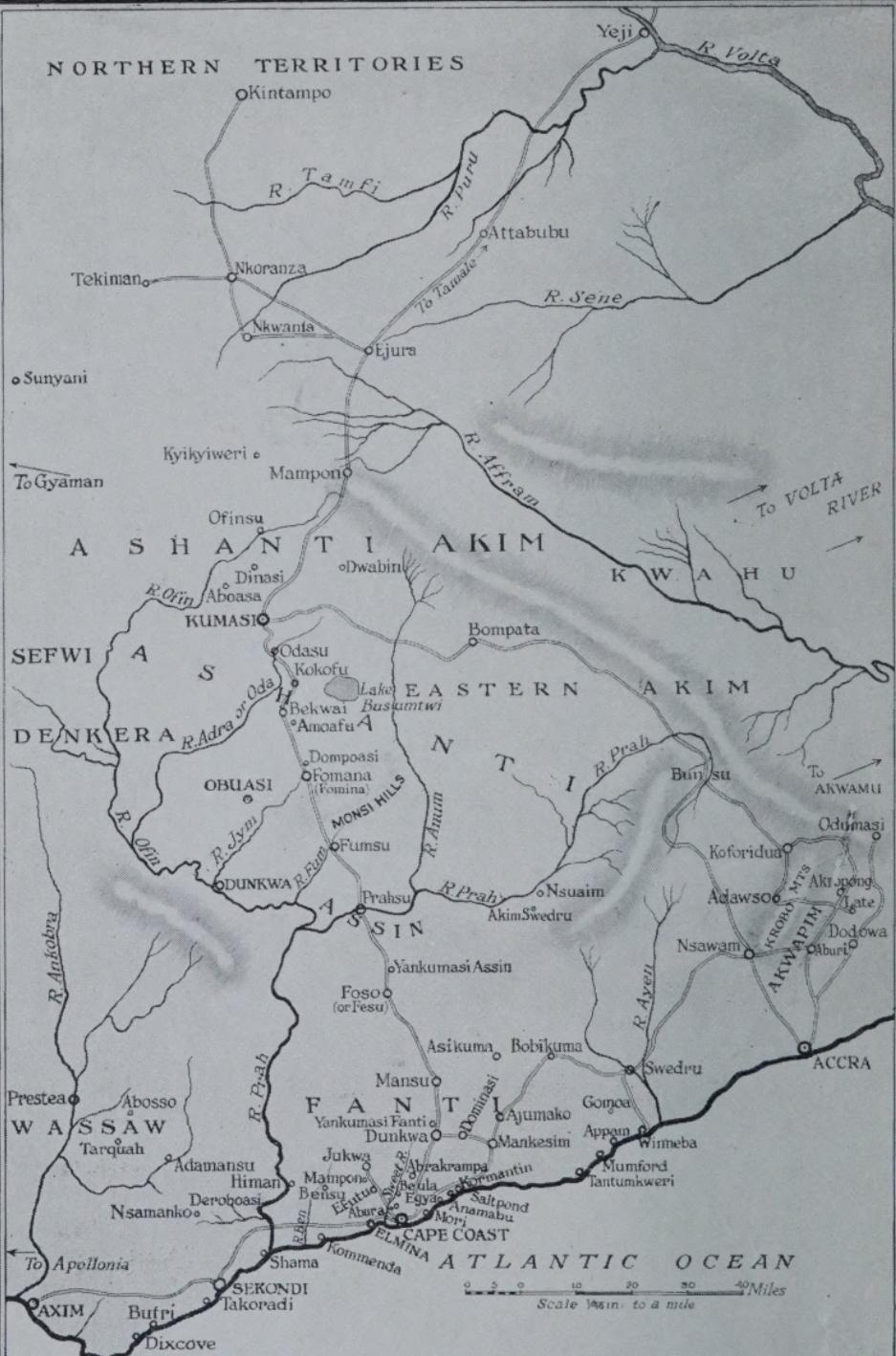
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NORTHERN TERRITORIES



MAP OF CENTRAL PART OF GOLD COAST

A
HISTORY
OF THE
AKAN PEOPLES
OF THE GOLD COAST

BY THE
REV. W. T. BALMER, M.A., B.D.

WITH FOREWORD BY
THE HON. C. W. WELMAN, M.A.

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TO THE PUPILS
Past and Present
of
MFANTSIPIM SCHOOL

FOREWORD

By the HON. C. W. WELMAN, M.A., Secretary for Native Affairs, Gold Coast.

THE REVEREND W. T. BALMER has done me the honour of asking me to write a Foreword to his History of the Akan Peoples of the Gold Coast, and it gives me especial pleasure to do so, because on reading it in manuscript I have been deeply impressed by its merits and its opportuneness.

For the early origins and antecedents of the Akan peoples in the times for which documentary evidence is lacking Mr. Balmer has pieced together a reasonable and not improbable account, founded on inferences from known facts. For historical times Mr. Balmer presents a simple and studiously fair statement of the facts in a small compass, so that all who read his short and easily read book can have a clear general idea as to the origin and present distribution of the Akan peoples, who inhabit the greater part of the Gold Coast Colony and Ashanti ; of their relationship to other peoples and especially of the relations between them and the English from the beginnings of the coastal trade through many vicissitudes to the present situation, in which it is a British Government that maintains peace within their borders, makes the laws of the land in which they all live, regulates their relations with the outside world

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and supervises and assists their advance in culture and development ; and of the great possibilities which lie before them in the future, if opportunities are wisely used, on the one hand by the people themselves, and on the other by those whose membership of the more advanced race which governs the country gives them such a grave responsibility not to wound and alienate, but to use their influence in a friendly and beneficial way. The value of the opportunity which Mr. Balmer's book for the first time provides for everyone in, connected with or interested in the Gold Coast, young and old, to acquire such a general grasp before proceeding to the study of the various phases of the history of the Akan peoples in greater detail, is inestimable. It is likely, and in my opinion to be hoped, that Mr. Balmer's History will be largely used in the Gold Coast for the instruction of the young. Claridge's History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti stands unapproached as yet as a monumental collation and skilful presentation of the principal original authorities and will continue to be of great value as a book of reference and for the use of more advanced students, but its size and its wealth of detail alone make it entirely unsuitable for use in schools, where it would only be possible with such a text-book to become partially acquainted in the whole of one's school career with a few isolated aspects and incidents of Gold Coast history without any just appreciation of the whole. To some extent the same applies to Reindorf's invaluable History, a mine of curious and interesting information.

One of the most important and valuable characteristics of Mr. Balmer's work is the way in which it links up the Akan people of the Gold Coast with the rest of the world,

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tracing their connection with great world-movements in the past, describing and explaining their points of contact with the modern world outside them, and indicating a future of ever fuller and more conscious association for good ends and useful purposes with the progressive peoples of the earth. By Mr. Balmer's conspectus the Akan people themselves are for the first time enabled to see themselves clearly in relation to mankind in general. The Akan peoples belong to a larger group of African peoples which have remained backward and isolated down to a remarkably late stage in the history of the world. Mr. Balmer accounts for this by their having been weakened and stupefied by their devastating experience in the course of being scattered and driven by a long succession of tribal movements and external and internal wars. Sir Harry Johnston somewhere remarks upon the appearance presented by this group of peoples of having been for hundreds of years out of contact with the rest of the world—out of the main current of human affairs, stagnating in a backwater, till a process even of deterioration seems to have set in and some had become degraded even below the level of the brute. Circumstances, vividly described by Mr. Balmer, have now brought this group into contact with other peoples and the points of contact are increasing every year. Mr. Balmer represents these facts in a simple and easily comprehensible form, so that the many in whose hands his book will be placed as an important part of their education will be able to grasp an idea of how they are related to the other nations—how they stand in the world ; the historical and geographical reasons for their backwardness, so that there is nothing of which they need feel ashamed in their present

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position, and the great possibilities which lie before them of rising in the scale of civilisation by means of their capacity to learn from others, choosing the good and what is suitable to their racial genius and aptitudes and discarding the rest. And no kindly and unprejudiced observer can doubt that their capacity is great. The very quality which is perhaps most often selected by the unamiable and shallow-minded as a target for their sneers, is, rightly directed, the strongest asset of this intelligent and adaptable people, I mean their faculty for imitation. When other people, whose arrival independently of direct European influence at a somewhat higher grade of barbaric culture usually wins the preference of the newcomer to West Africa, remain hide-bound by their religion and by their conservative adherence to their own peculiar modes of life and thought, the Negro of the Akan race will be far advanced in modern civilisation, because he is more accessible to new influences. Mr. Balmer, while by no means blind to the faults of the people whose history he has written, is very optimistic with regard to their potentialities and he seeks to give history its true practical value for mankind by pointing out the lessons that the Akan peoples can learn from their failures and shortcomings in the past and the course of conduct and the social qualities which they must cultivate, if they are to become a great people in the future. "If they learn the true secret of freedom, which is that of being willing to help and serve each other, it is just as possible for them as for any other human race to rise to power and influence." And again : "Mutual helpfulness, which is the true secret of political strength." If the Akan people, and especially the Fanti branch of it, which, owing

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to the defects developed by its circumstances, needs the admonition most, can attain to the grace and the practical wisdom of unity and good faith, it has a great future before it.

The whole attitude and atmosphere of Mr. Balmer's book are peculiarly opportune and welcome at the present rather critical moment in the growth of a national consciousness in the people of the Gold Coast. There is especial need to seek and ensue goodwill between the races, European and African, whose lots destiny has cast together on the Gold Coast. I am glad to think that Mr. Balmer's book will make it clear to the thoughtful of the African race that those of the European race who wish, on behalf of the best and most enlightened of their people, to give the fullest and most generous interpretation and development to the long-established friendship between England and the people of the Gold Coast, are sincere and firm believers in their potential fitness for the best and highest activities of which human beings are capable. Much harm can be done by too much importance being attached by the affronted to the mischievous remarks and conduct of young, ignorant and thoughtless members of the more advanced race, and it is much to be regretted that the Press of the Gold Coast, which as yet produces practically the only indigenous literature on matters of national importance and therefore wields an undisputed influence over the whole of the African reading public, is inclined to make rather a special feature of petty friction of this kind. Such an attitude, and it is of serious importance that this should be remembered at an early stage, is symptomatic of one of the principal defects of the human mind, which, manifesting

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itself in various ways, leads to bitterness and misunderstanding and conflict, and periodically wrecks the brightest hopes and aspirations of the well-disposed among mankind.

Mr. Balmer has shown a notable impartiality, which will ensure the sympathetic attention of many who would otherwise have been inclined to undervalue the book as only another *ex parte* statement. He has given us a well-balanced account, assigning due praise and blame, and making it clear in his description of the association of the English with the Southern elements of the Akan people, before the annexation of Ashanti, where the English fell short in the support and assistance due to their protégés and where the Fantis showed themselves dilatory and unassisting at the critical moment, and not putting all the blame on one side, as has so often been done by inconsiderate writers or writers only partially acquainted with the facts, an unfairness which has been the cause of bitter recriminations. It is refreshing to find an English writer at last saying a good word for the Fantis, who are undoubtedly a people of high intelligence and great potentialities, belonging to the same stock as the Ashantis and only falling short at a time when, unfortunately for their reputation, attention was very vividly focussed on the Gold Coast in some of the more obvious manly virtues displayed by their highly-organised Northern neighbours owing to circumstances which Mr. Balmer has made clear. One of the principal features of Mr. Balmer's History is the justice which at last is done in it to the point of view of the coast people and to their circumstances. Contempt and dislike of the coast people come very badly from Europeans, owing to whose pursuit of their own aims and interests very largely, as Mr. Balmer shows, the tribes were

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reduced to disunity, and whose friends and allies the coast people were. That British chivalry which always likes to be particularly kind to a conquered foe has in this case shown a tendency to go rather beyond its bounds by turning against its former friends. It is well to mention that Mr. Balmer does not now go to the other extreme.

At the same time Mr. Balmer speaks plainly, and especially regarding the Fanti people, whom he knows so well and to whose point of view he has given an unusually sympathetic consideration. He is unsparing in his exposure of Fanti errors of judgment and of the sorry figure they cut as a weak and divided people. They must be prepared to see and learn by their past faults and mistakes and build up on their realisation of them, without indulging in the weakling's habit of trying to put the blame on others, which has been far too common in the Cape Coast Press and in other organs which owe their existence very largely to the Cape Coast genius and tradition.

I do not propose to comment here on any of the details of Mr. Balmer's narrative. Everyone will not agree with all his statements, but Mr. Balmer has put forth his version, and if any wish to dispute it, it is a matter of evidences. Some consecutive theory or statement in a compact form from the earliest origins to the present time was undoubtedly desirable, and alternative ones to Mr. Balmer's must come into the open and justify themselves. It will be a very satisfactory result if the people of the country will begin to take an interest in their own history and will draw attention to statements which they believe to be incorrect, giving their grounds and evidences for a contrary opinion. I will confine myself to observing in particular with regard to

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some interesting references by Mr. Balmer to predecessors of the Fanti people in the coastal regions that there is still plenty of scope for detailed investigation of the vestiges, linguistic and otherwise, of the older inhabitants, such as the Fetus, the Etsifu and the Saboes (Asebu) mentioned by Mr. Balmer.

In conclusion I venture to express the opinion that Mr. Balmer has deserved very well of the Gold Coast and the hope that his book will be widely read by Europeans—especially newcomers to the Gold Coast—as well as by Africans.

C. W. WELMAN,
Secretary for Native Affairs, Gold Coast.

August, 1925.

PREFACE

THIS little book is an attempt to tell in a connected form the story of the principal peoples of the Gold Coast. The germ of these chapters lay in lessons given to the boys of Mfantsipim School when the writer had charge of that school in the years 1907-1911. If any old boys read it they will probably hear some echoes of those lessons and the discussions which arose out of them. No teacher ever had a keener set of boys to deal with and many were the probing questions raised by them. To some of these questions they may find more adequate answers in these pages than were possible in those days.

The authorities relied on need hardly be specified. They will be easily recognised by any who are at all conversant with the subject, and the author acknowledges his obligations thereto. But in addition to the works of previous writers, the author has also consulted the traditions of the native elders from whom he has learnt much by following the example of his boys and asking questions. He has also not hesitated to intermingle his own thought and interpretation of the chain of events.

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The aim has been to give the story in as connected a narrative as possible, in the hope thereby to exhibit some thread of purpose guiding the gradual development of the whole. To this end the writer has tried to avoid the excessive detail to which some predecessors have seemed prone; but it is hoped that nothing relevant to the central theme has been omitted. What has been omitted, of deliberate intent, is matter which so largely characterises native traditions, and which if preserved would make African history a mere *chronique scandaleuse*. Such stuff were better dropt clean out of mind.

The aim has also been to raise the subject to a higher plane and to show that there has been a definable purpose at work moulding the career of these people. It has not been a mere squabble of kites and crows, a blind confusion of selfish interests. If the present representatives of the chief actors in this drama could be led to grasp that purpose, make it more spiritual and follow it loyally then assuredly there would be a worthy future for them as a nation. It is in the hope of this that the writer finds the justification of his method. As a recent writer on the science of history has said, "It will always make for better history to generalise the soul of a people and regard it as a uniform striving towards self-realisation amid continual change of circumstance, than to detail the endless circumstances without reference to the controlling purpose that utilises or resists them."

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It has been customary on the part of some writers, notably the late Dr. Claridge, to contrast the two chief peoples of the country, lauding the Ashantis at the expense of the Fantis. This the writer thinks is an error due to a superficial reading of the situation. The Ashantis are truly worthy of respect and in the opinion of the writer the series of monarchs who directed the fortunes of Ashanti beginning with Osei Tutu and ending with Prempeh were a remarkable set of men of whom their people might well be proud. Were all the historical material available an astonishing story might be told of them. But the Fantis had also their distinguishing qualities and this history has striven to give an account of them and assign their proper value.

The goal for which one should hope and strive is surely that these people be moulded into a real unity. The lessons drawn from their history should be such as to set forth plainly the desirability and worthiness of, and the way to this goal. It can serve no good purpose to hold one section up to ridicule. No one, least of all an African, is likely to take part in a united enterprise in which his share is to be the butt.

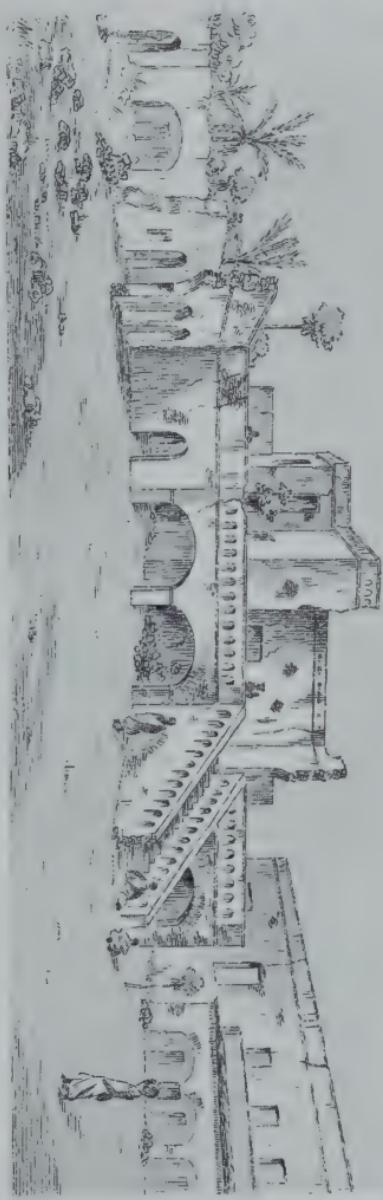
Mutual misunderstanding and suspicion has too often been prominent in the episodes of the past history of West Africa. The African has a soul and a view point worthy of study, very real if not always apparent to outsiders. It is for Africans to make their spiritual purposes actual, plain, worthy

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and attractive, and for others to assist them in patience to win their soul and achieve those purposes.

W. T. B.

I am indebted to Mr. W. F. Hedges, F.R.I.B.A., for the drawings facing pages 16 and 161.



THE OLD SLAVE MARKET CHRISTIANSBORG.

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CHAPTER I

ORIGINS

IT is not easy to trace the authentic history of the beginnings of the Fanti and Ashanti people because of the lack of written documents or clear traditions. In place of exact knowledge one can only make surmises concerning the dim remote past by inferences from such facts as their present geographical position, their relations to other nations and their language.

The lands occupied by the various tribes of the Akan race border on the west coast of Africa, along what is known as the Gulf of Guinea. Along the shore of this part of the continent dwell representatives of a large number of nations and the presence of these nations in that region is the first fact which demands explanation, and to which we should attend. Their position is best understood by observing that the territory occupied by them is not the entire western side of Africa, but that it is one end of a broad band which stretches right across the continent from east to west. The northern half of Africa is made up of three of these bands, the first of which is a narrow strip of fertile country all along the north, sloping towards the Mediterranean Sea and

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comprising Tunis, Tripoli and Morocco. Next to that is the immense band of the Sahara Desert. To the south of this lies the third band, the one most interesting to us. This third band is quite different from the sterile sandy waste to the north of it. It is very fertile and by its fertility presents a great contrast to the desert. It begins in the east, near the head-waters of the river Nile and extends to the west, right across the continent, until it reaches the Atlantic Ocean. This fertile band in some parts is nearly a thousand miles wide from north to south and four thousand miles from east to west. Its name is the Sudan. So that what travellers to-day are accustomed to term the "West Coast" is really the western end of the Sudan.

The Sudan is a region which offers many points of interest. Its surface is very diversified. Much of it consists of open rolling plains, but there are also vast stretches of dense forest. There are many rivers, some of noble size, by whose banks and in whose valleys dwell countless numbers of men and women in village and town. The courses of these rivers have their direction determined by groups and ranges of hills and mountains. Its soil is for the most part very productive, especially towards the west, while hidden in its rocks lies an untold wealth of minerals. Truly the Sudan is a notable portion of the earth's surface.

But the most interesting and noteworthy aspect of the Sudan is embodied in its history. In far past ages, so long ago that the years can scarcely be

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numbered, the Sudan, thus stretching across Africa, has served as an immense corridor by which many nations have slowly found their way from the east to the west of the continent. All history seems to have begun in the east. Very probably the first Negro people entered Africa or took their rise in the lands near the river Nile and settled at that end of the Sudan. How long it is since that took place is, of course, unknown, but it must have been very many thousands of years ago.

As time went on circumstances arose which compelled the first settlers in the east to move. These circumstances would be of varying kinds. A famine may have happened as so often was the case in ancient times when men had less knowledge of how to grow food than they have now. In the search for food they would be led to move from such homes and settlements as they had formed. Or, new hordes of men would come into their neighbourhood from the east, as they themselves had done, attracted by the fruitful land. These new comers would press upon the first inhabitants and gradually drive them forward.

The movement of the people is supposed to have turned in two directions, one southwards by way of the great lakes and the east coast, the other westward by way of the wide strip of land which we have described as a corridor and now know as the Sudan. The people who turned southward afterwards came to be known as the Bantus, one of the great divisions of the African people. The similarity of the

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words Bantu and Fanti may not be without significance.

But it is with those who travelled westward that we are concerned because it was they who came to form that other division of the African peoples to which the West African nations belong, namely the Negro race.

This migration westward from the valley of the Nile did not take place all at once or continuously. It is only when we put together in our minds what happened at separate periods during many long centuries that we can call it one movement. It was a movement which was repeated many times in succession. One nation or section of people after another was forced along by the pressure of their enemies behind or else they were led on by the necessity of seeking food in new districts. It was not a movement like the steady stream of a flowing river, but rather was it like the successive waves of the sea, following one another and sometimes falling upon one another. Yet, while like waves in one way, in another way it was different. The waves of the sea follow each other in rapid succession. The waves of people, in the movement we are speaking of, moved slowly and the interval of time between one wave and the next would not be a few seconds, but most likely many years. A band of people would burst into one district and drive out the people whom they found there. Having driven the old inhabitants out, the new-comers would then settle down, perhaps for several hundreds of years,

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until they, in turn, were compelled to move and seek new lands.

But ever the move was, on the whole, westwards, and ever new peoples came on, sweeping the old nations before them. When the first bands of people reached the parts to the west of Lake Chad, which is supposed to have been in those days a much wider expanse of water than it is to-day, they had more room in which to stir. They scattered and spread in different directions. Some kept on to the west, while others turned to the south, most likely following the river-valleys. At last the first-comers found themselves where they could no longer travel further, for they were on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean and there they had to stay. There it is that their descendants are found to-day, a great number of small nations differing in many ways from each other, holding traditions of age-long strife and enmity. The number of these separate nations is so great that many who have not lived amongst them find it hard to believe that they can be so numerous or that the inhabitants of districts so near each other can be so different. But dwelling along the shore of the western end of the Sudan, from Calabar to Senegal, are to be found, at the present time, hundreds of separate nations. Some people think that, because they are all black in the colour of their skin, they are all alike in everything else. Yet a Frenchman and an Englishman are not the same because they are both white.

That which best marks the difference between

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nations is their language. Though French and English people may be of the same colour and wear similar dress, yet the fact that their speech is different shows that they do not belong to the same nation. In the same way, although the many men and women who live in the western end of the Sudan are mostly of the same colour, yet they are divided into different distinct nations, and that they are really different is proved by the differences of their languages. Of these languages there are several hundreds, hence we conclude that the peoples who speak these varying languages, which are not merely dialects one of another or of some common tongue, belong to so many separate nations.

Some of these nations are small in number and live lives which are primitive, not possessing much civilisation. These weaker and smaller nations are most probably the descendants of those who formed the first waves of the human tide which flowed across the continent, harassed and oppressed by the stronger masses of people behind them. No doubt they often turned and made a stand against those who were invading their lands from the east and north. They would fight hard to resist the taking of their farms and dwellings from them. Many bitter battles were waged. But so unceasing and overpowering was the pressure, so numerous were their foes that in the end they had to give way and flee towards the west. In the warfare their strongest and most intelligent men would be slain for they would fight the hardest, and most daringly, and

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their finest women would be taken captives. Only the weakest would be left to escape, and that is the reason why so many of the people who live in certain out-of-the-way parts of the Atlantic coast are so poor and undeveloped. All the spirit was crushed out of them in the course of their long wanderings and fightings across the Sudan. It is possible indeed that some nations were wholly destroyed and perished altogether.

Not all these nations, however, are weak and feeble. There are differences of intelligence and strength as well as differences of speech. No one, for instance, would consider the Fantis and Ashantis of the Gold Coast as unintelligent peoples, or the Yorubas, Nupès and Hausas of Nigeria. But when the Fantis reached the coast they found remains of poor nations who have now almost died out. These were the Asibus, the Etsifus, and others. For example, near Winneba there is still a small remnant of people who speak a language very different from any Akan language and who were most likely the inhabitants of that district before the Fantis came and overpowered them. About the mouths of the river Niger also there dwell people who are much more simple and primitive in their mode of life than the people further to the north and west such as the Yorubas, Nupès or Hausas.

One proof that the Negro people were once able to withstand the nations who were pressing on them from the east and north is the fact that there existed at one time a powerful Negro kingdom in the

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western Sudan. This kingdom lay to the north of the Gold Coast and was known as Ghana. Its chief city was Walata, or, as it is sometimes called, Aiwalatin. This Negro empire lasted nearly a thousand years and only came to an end about the year 1400 A.D., so that it must have been established in 400 A.D. There is a tradition that its history goes back much further still, perhaps to 600 B.C. During that long time it had to contend with enemies who attacked its territories from the east. It was a purely Negro kingdom, and although it was at last destroyed by an African people, its conquerors were not a true black nation, but belonged to a race other than the Negro. Even during the thousand years of the existence of the Ghana kingdom it was once conquered by an invading army which came from the north, across the great desert. These conquerors were a white skinned people called Berbers and were to a certain degree akin to Europeans. But after a while the Ghanata were able to recover their power and overcame the Berbers who for several centuries lived in the country subject to the Negro rulers.

In order to do this the people of Ghana must have been able to combine together in their struggle against those who coveted their land, as without unity no nation can be strong. Through the strength which was won by its unity this Negro kingdom was able to extend its rule all over the western Sudan even to the shores of the Ocean. It was from its name—Ghana—that the coast was

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called by a name which has become a famous term in the languages of Europeans who know it as the Guinea coast. This word, Guinea, is a rough imitation of Ghana, and was first used with the meaning of "land of the blacks," which doubtless was what the term, Ghana, meant. The modern meaning of guinea, a gold coin, is only accidental. The first coins of that name were made of gold which came from Guinea or Ghana, and was considered better than ordinary gold.

It is very probable that the Fanti, Ashanti, Ahanta and Akan people in general formed originally part of this ancient Negro kingdom, dwelling in districts more or less remote from the central city of government, Walata. One sign of this is the similarity between the name "Ghana" and "Akan" which is acknowledged by these coast peoples as being their common original tribe. This by itself might not be a very strong proof, but when we notice that in all the above names the same sound "an" or "ant" occurs, the probability is strengthened. Moreover, there still exists, among the coast people, a tradition of a powerful and influential city called Walata, and there is a tendency to call any distant native city which rises into power, such as Lagos—Allata. Finally, it is on record that when Europeans first came to the Guinea coast in the fifteenth century and sought permission to trade, they asked the natives on the coast which was the chief power in the land and were told to apply to the people who then ruled the old city of Aiwalatin or Walata.

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In process of time the Ghanata, or people of Ghana, lost their secret of unity and co-operation and, with that, their power. They became a prey to their enemies. Their empire was destroyed and the territories which had acknowledged their rule fell into independent parts. As has been said, certain of those parts were the lands now occupied by the people who inhabit the country known as the Gold Coast, especially the Akan peoples.

The story told in this book is chiefly concerned with these peoples in their relations and dealings with each other and the nations of Europe, especially the British, with whom they came into contact through being near the coast.

This meeting with Europeans on the coast of Guinea is destined to be the most decisive event in the history of the Negro peoples and, if rightly used by them, will enable them to recover once again a position of power and influence among the nations of the earth, not only equal to that which they held in the far-off days of the vanished kingdom of Ghana, but one which will far exceed it in all that is worthy of esteem. The right use of their present opportunity will depend upon their learning how to avoid the fatal cause which ruined them as a people in the past.

Two things marked the ancient days of the Sudan peoples and made them to differ from those of the present. In past ages all the contact which they had with the outside world was by land to the north and east. Now they have to deal with people who

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come to their country by sea and from the west and south. The present situation is almost the exact opposite of that which obtained in the past. Second, in bygone ages it was considered perfectly right that people should make slaves of one another whenever they could. Even to-day there are many people who seek to make profit from other men's labour but, nevertheless, no one nation openly makes slaves of another. Every man is given opportunity to work in freedom. It was because, in the past, the Negro people of the Sudan made slaves of each other that they lost their strength and became disunited and weak as a nation. If they learn the true secret of freedom which is that of being willing to help and serve one another, it is just as possible for them as for any other members of the human race to acquire honour and influence.

The recorded history of the Negroes does not extend very far back in time, but what we do know from writings goes entirely to show how true this is. When the ancient centre of the Ghana kingdom fell into decay and lost its power, the parts of the empire had to provide for themselves. Some of these parts, especially the Fantis and Ashantis still retained some ability to govern, but unhappily, their story is only one which shows how, at length, they came to lose it altogether.

The Fantis are a gifted race and possess great skill in many ways. Their language alone is one testimony of this. They have artistic powers especially in song and drawing. Yet they have

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never been able to combine among themselves under one head and hence were again and again attacked and their lands overrun even by their own kinsfolk.

The story of the Ashantis, who are equally gifted, shows that they did possess the power to combine and by doing so they acquired political strength and were able to extend their power over their neighbours and, in a measure, create an empire. Had they been truly wise they might have been able to restore the position of the ancient kingdom of Ghana with themselves as a new centre. Unhappily they retained the ancient habit of making slaves. They regarded the lands of the people around, especially those which lay to the south, as simply hunting grounds for slaves to work for them. This they did even though these lands were inhabited by their own kindred such as the Denkeras, the Assins and the Fantis.

They are not altogether to blame for this as the custom of making slaves is a very old one, and has been practised by nations of much greater knowledge and power than the Negroes, especially by those who lived in the north and east of Africa, to whom the peoples of the Sudan naturally looked for guidance, and whom they took as examples for themselves to follow.

We have said that in all probability the old kingdom of Ghana was established about the year 400 A.D. About two hundred years after that, there arose a very powerful movement along the

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north of Africa. This was caused by the rise of what afterwards became one of the famous religions of the world and which is still very strong in many parts of the continent. This religion is Islam or Muhammadanism. It exerted so great an influence in its early years that it broke up ancient kingdoms and empires in the north and east of Africa and created new ones. Its power even extended into Europe where it occupied two countries, Spain and Turkey. By about the year 1100 A.D. it had crossed the Sahara desert and made many converts in the parts ruled by Ghana. It was the influence of this religion that stirred up the nations which in the end destroyed Ghana. By those nations it was regarded as the most important religion and the greatest power in the world, and for many centuries its prestige was very high.

But about the time that Ghana fell the religion of Muhammadanism also began to decline. The Christian people in Spain arose and drove out the Muhammadans from their land across the straits of Gibraltar into north Africa, and from that time the trade and other benefits of civilisation which had come from the north across the Sahara to the peoples of the Sudan, became poorer and weaker, although the Africans still thought that Muhammadanism was a great religion. They did not know what was taking place in the world outside Africa. The leadership of Islam had passed into the hands of a nation called the Turks, and since then the power of Islam gradually declined. This can be seen by

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the fact that at the present the religion has no leader, as, two years ago, the Turks deposed their Sultan who held the position. But the decline which has led to the present unhappy situation began five hundred years ago. This, however, was hidden from the eyes of the dwellers in the Sudan.

Again, this religion which Africans have respected so much has always tolerated the habit of making slaves and it is no doubt from them that the Negroes learnt the fatal custom. For it is a fatal custom. Wherever it has been allowed, the people who practised it have, in time, gone down in power, wealth and learning, and the chief reason for the decay has been the custom of making slaves.

In coming into contact with Europeans on the west coast, the Negroes have met two things, Christianity and people who trade largely in ships. Both these things, in the long run and when carried out properly, oppose slavery. No one who truly follows Jesus Christ can make a slave of a fellow-man. Although for a long time many Christians did make slaves yet, at length, as they came to understand their religion more fully, they perceived that slavery was wrong and was contrary to the spirit of Jesus Christ. It is remarkable, also, that seafaring people always love liberty. Although slaves have been employed on ships it has generally been done by way of punishment and gradually the practice has ceased. It would seem as if there were something about the sea which hinders slavery.

If Africans could follow the example of Europeans

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in these two things they also would be able to learn what true freedom is. Christianity teaches us to serve one another, freely, no matter what it costs us. That is one way in which men become free. Another way to become free is by learning to combine. Men cannot sail in large ships unless they know how to combine. The captain who is in authority must not think only of himself, but of the safety and welfare of his sailors. The sailors must be quick and willing to obey. It is by this wise combination of ruler and subjects that sea-going peoples are always free.

These things are not soon learnt or easy to practice. It took Christians a long time, many centuries, to understand that their religion taught freedom for all men. Even now many of them find it hard to believe and practice fully. So the Negro must not expect that he will obtain these blessings all at once and without effort. History teaches us that all good things are hard to win, but it shows us how to acquire them. Let us read the story of the Akan peoples during the last two centuries in such a way as to learn this lesson.

CHAPTER II

THE RISE OF ASHANTI

THE kingdom of Ghana was overthrown about the year 1400 A.D. by a people whose territories lay somewhat to the south-east of Walata. These were known as the Melle. Their empire, though it swiftly rose to power, on the ruins of the old government, and spread widely, did not last long. Being of another race they had no sympathy with the outlying provinces of the conquered empire, such as the Denkeras, Ashantis and Fantis. The Melle were a violent and proud race and regarded the peoples in the south between them and the sea as merely good enough to be hunted for slaves.

After the lapse of little more than a century, the Melle, in their turn, were overcome by a people who had long been rising in power and who came from still further to the east. These were the Songhay who set up an empire, the rule of which extended from Lake Chad to the Atlantic Ocean, and northward, across the desert, to the borders of Morocco.

Both the Melle and the Songhay made the city of Timbuctu the capital and seat of government of their empire. Under them this celebrated city

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became the centre of a considerable civilisation. Out of the series of rulers of the Songhese empire the two most distinguished were Sonni Ali and Abu Bekr. Sonni Ali was the last of a number of warrior kings who established his power by the sword. He was succeeded not by his son or any member of his family, but by his vizier or prime minister, Abu Bekr, who ascended the throne in the year 1468.

Abu Bekr did not seek to extend his empire by conquering fresh territories, but he made it his aim to make his position firm as a ruler by doing all he could, according to his knowledge, for the good of his dominions as he found them. Under him Songhay rose to great eminence and renown. He was a wise man and sought to preserve his kingdom in peace. He encouraged learning and the progress of his subjects. The best way to achieve this, he thought, was to look towards the north and east. It was from those directions that previously the products of civilisation and art had reached the Sudan. Abu Bekr did not know that the benefits which came from the north had their origin in Europe and that communication with Europe through Spain had been cut off. Nor did he know that the power of Muhammadanism which had influenced the Sudan from the east, had begun to decline and could not, in the end, render him lasting assistance. Neither was he aware that at that time the Europeans were beginning to travel to the Sudan in ships and were slowly finding their

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way to the west coast, trading with the natives whom they found there. In the same year 1468 in which Abu Bekr became king of Songhay, the Portuguese were planning the castle of Elmina. He died seventy years later, in 1538. His long reign was followed by a period of anarchy and misrule. Eight kings succeeded him each reigning for a brief period, and in 1591 the Songhese empire was destroyed by the Moroccans, the very people to whom the great ruler, a century before, had looked for help and wisdom in educating his people.

The Songhese, like their predecessors, the Melle, despised the negroes of the west and south and only troubled them in order to capture slaves. Left to themselves and finding that the old capital of the empire to which they had belonged was no longer powerful, the more vigorous sections of the Akan peoples began to do what they could to provide for their own well-being.

Nothing certain is known of the first steps which the Ashantis took to set up their state, but very probably it was during the period when the Songhese empire was tottering to its fall, in the troubled years which followed the death of the great Abu Bekr. At that time the Ashantis occupied the land now known as Adansi, the similarity of which term to the name by which they know themselves—Asante—is very plain. There are three towns for which the honour is claimed of being the first seat of recognised authority, Kyikyiweri, Bekwai and Dompoasi. In those days Kumasi was not yet built.

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Tradition says that the first acknowledged king was Twum Antwi, but he is a somewhat mythical figure, and it is not known precisely when he reigned. The first ruler whose date is definitely known was Kobina Amamfi, who reigned from 1600 to 1630. To him succeeded Oti Akentin, who ruled until 1663.

During the reign of Akentin the Ashanti power was firmly established and these people had already shown their ability to govern by their power of internal discipline. By means of this they began to extend their rule and impose their authority upon surrounding tribes.

It would seem that the same spirit which prompted the Ashantis to establish and consolidate themselves as a sovereign state, also animated some of the neighbouring sections of the scattered Ghana empire. In particular was this apparent in a tribe which dwelt not far from Bekwai, and was known as the Denkeras. Their territory lay to the west. When Ashanti began to extend its power over other nations in its neighbourhood the jealousy of the Denkeras was aroused. They saw that their own position was in peril. While they were willing to be in subjection to the authority of the ancient city of Aiwalatin, whose power and prestige was respected on account of its antiquity, they were not prepared to submit to the domination of those whom they regarded as no better than, if as good as, themselves. To the Denkeras the Ashantis were mere upstarts and newcomers whose kingdom was but of yesterday.

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Hence, for a long time, intense rivalry prevailed between the two young kingdoms. They were too near together to be friends, and they spent much of their time in watching one another's doings. Perhaps it was owing to the feeling that it would be better if the seats of the rival governments were at a greater distance from each other that the city of Kumasi was founded by the next Ashanti king. At any rate the tradition is that the fourth king Obiri Yebua Manu, who reigned from 1663 to 1697, first began to build the city which afterwards became so famous. The centre of authority, however, remained for a while longer at Bekwai. During this reign other important towns were founded such as Dwabin, Nsuta, and Mampon. These, with the towns already mentioned, formed the nucleus of the Ashanti kingdom.

Manu was followed by one of the most celebrated if not the greatest of the kings of Ashanti—Osei Tutu, who succeeded his uncle in 1697 and reigned thirty-four years. Events occurred during this reign which had great influence upon the subsequent history and career of the nation. Osei Tutu was a man of great wisdom and of strong character. There is a story that, in the preceding reign, the power of Denkera for a time surpassed that of Ashanti. After having defeated Ashanti the king of Denkera compelled Manu to send Tutu, then called Kwami, to his court as a hostage. He thought that by this means Ashanti would be hindered from attacking him again. Kwami therefore spent his early years

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as an unwilling captive in Denkera. He grew up into a fine man of great courage and determination and succeeded in making his escape to the country of the Akwamus where he was sheltered by a friendly priest named Tutu. In making his escape he was aided by a princess the daughter of the king of Denkera. When his uncle died he became king of his own country, and in gratitude to his friend, the priest of Akwamu, he ever afterwards took the name of Tutu. The princess who had assisted him to flee from Denkera also managed to escape and became his wife.

This was a great disappointment to Bosianti, the king of Denkera, who had hoped, on the death of the old king, Manu, he would be able to unite the two kingdoms under himself. As he had the heir to Ashanti a prisoner in his own capital, he had imagined it would be an easy task to achieve his ambitious purpose of extending his power.

As soon as Tutu ascended the throne he set about increasing the strength of his kingdom. He sought to do this in four ways. An army was collected, and he took care that it was well trained and disciplined in order to be prepared for the struggle which he foresaw to be inevitable. The capital was removed to Kumasi. He made an alliance with his cousin Buatin, king of Dwabin, by which each monarch swore to come to the assistance of the other in time of need. He caused a stool to be made which afterwards became very famous. It was covered with gold and enriched with many ornaments. With

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many impressive ceremonies this stool was consecrated by the fetish priests as the symbol of the soul of the Ashanti nation. By doing this he succeeded in stirring the imagination of the people and made a powerful appeal to them to combine together and resist their oppressor. On account of his success in achieving this object, Osei Tutu may be said to have been the real founder of the Ashanti state. It was in his reign that the power of Ashanti first began to make itself felt.

It was not long before the forethought and preparations of this wise king were justified. In two years the expected struggle with Denkera began. Bosanti, when he found that Tutu did not intend to submit to be his vassal, gathered a great army and invaded the country in 1699. The war lasted a considerable time. The forces of Denkera were defeated more than once, but refused to yield and they carried on the struggle even after Bosanti died. His successor, Ntim Gyakari, endeavoured to do what Bosanti had failed to accomplish. He persuaded the Akims whose lands lay to the south of Ashanti to aid him in his fight with the victorious Tutu. All his efforts were in vain and in a final battle he was utterly defeated.

This war between Ashanti and Denkera was waged so violently and lasted so long, that the news of it travelled far and wide and attracted the attention of Europeans, who were trading at various places on the coast, especially at Elmina. Both the Ashantis and the Denkeras felt that the issue of the contest

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would be decisive, and they each put forth every effort to win the victory. They discarded to a large extent the old methods of fighting with swords and spears, bows and arrows, and learnt to use firearms which they obtained from the Europeans. This led to an increased demand for these weapons and that, in turn, naturally led the merchants to make enquiries as to the cause, and in this way it was that they heard for the first time of the rise of a native power in the interior. Thus it may be said that Ashanti first became known to the world outside Africa about the year 1700.

The connection between Ashanti and Elmina goes back a long way into past centuries. Doubtless it was from that port that Tutu obtained his main supply of muskets, gunpowder and lead. He early learnt the lesson which was hidden from the astute Abu Bekr, that connection with the south and with the sea was of vastly more value than the old trade routes from the north across the desert land. Consequently he took a keen interest in Elmina and was fully aware of its importance for the welfare of his country. With the instinct of a true statesman he understood that if his nation was to take the lead as he meant it to take the lead among the Akan peoples, it was necessary for it to get into touch with the sea in order to trade with the merchants who came from beyond the sea. This shows what a sagacious leader of men he was and that he had ideas in advance of his generation. Had the rulers of Ashanti always been able to understand

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the meaning of events beyond the sea as did this wise Tutu, the history of their country would have followed a very different course in after years.

It so happened that Denkera, being nearer the sea, had known of the European sea-traders for some time before the Ashantis. This is evident from two facts which are known in connection with the final battle in which Tutu obtained the victory over his rivals. When the defeated Denkeras fled from the field of battle, they left behind them in the hands of the victors two small cannons, which had been given to them by the Europeans, either of Elmina or of Cape Coast. These trophies are still to be seen in Kumasi.

The second fact is more interesting still and, in later years, played a part of extreme importance in the relations between the Ashantis and the Europeans. In the camp of the vanquished Denkeras was discovered a piece of paper or "note," as it came to be called, on which it was stated that the Dutch, who then occupied the castle of Elmina, paid rent for the ground on which it stood. This rent was at first paid to the people of Elmina itself; but for some reason or other the "note" became the possession of the chief of Kommenda. The people of Kommenda quarrelled with Denkera, and in the subsequent war they were overcome and the "note" passed into the hands of Bosanti. In the memorable battle in which Denkera finally succumbed to Ashanti this coveted piece of paper was captured among the booty.

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Tutu at once recognised the significance and value of this "note." Although only a piece of paper he perceived that it was worth much more than many cannon, for it gave him a claim to the overlordship of Elmina and even of the castle in which the European traders dwelt. He at once claimed the rent of the castle, and from that time the Dutch paid it to him and his successors. The Dutch having agreed to pay the rent to the masters of the land did not, of course, greatly care to whom they paid it. To them, one Negro king was as good as another, and as everyone knew that the Ashantis had been the victors in the late war and actually held the "note" in their hands, they made no demur, but complied with the request of Tutu. In the next chapter we shall endeavour to tell the story of the coming of the Europeans to the coast which will lead us to speak more directly of the Fanti people. Meanwhile, let us pursue the destiny of Osei Tutu.

Having overcome the Denkeras, Tutu next turned his attention to the Akims whom he determined to punish for the assistance they had rendered to his enemy Ntim Gyakari. His army, flushed with triumph, gained victory after victory over their new foes. The Akims, however, proved themselves to be no mean adversaries and, as often as they were defeated, only retreated to fight again at another place. Again and again they resumed the struggle. They retired beyond the river Prah where they succeeded in obtaining some small advantages in certain unimportant skirmishes. The Ashantis far

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outnumbered the Akims and though checked pressed ruthlessly forward, so that the Akims made a nickname for them: Kum apim a apim beba—kill a thousand and a thousand more will come. The contest continued so long that Tutu determined to proceed to the scene of the conflict in person. As often happens when a smaller nation is faring badly at the hands of a larger one, the Akims began the practice of fighting in small bands which kept appearing in unexpected places and hiding themselves in ambushes. This sort of warfare is called guerilla fighting.

Hearing that the great king was about to come to their country one of these bands of Akims prepared an ambush at the place where he would cross the Prah. As Tutu was being carried in his hammock over the stream the guns of the concealed Akims rang out, and the king was wounded severely. His attendants were taken completely by surprise and scattered in panic. The brave king tried to rally them, but fell dead before the fire of a second volley. His body fell into the river and, though diligently sought for, was never recovered.

Thus perished a gallant and noble ruler. But though his end was untimely he had achieved much for his country. He had succeeded in imposing the authority of Ashanti not only on Denkera, but also on Tufel, Kwahu, and Assin. He had even led his victorious and much dreaded army beyond the river Tano in the west.

CHAPTER III

THE COMING OF THE EUROPEANS

ALTHOUGH it was not until the year 1700, through the disturbance caused by the war between Tutu and Denkera, that the Europeans first heard of Ashanti, yet they had been on the coast many years before that, for a period of nearly two and a half centuries. Without doubt the Ashantis had known of them, but for a long time the traders who had come from over the sea made no effort to go beyond the shore on which their forts and settlements stood. Their object was simply to trade and their activities were confined to commerce with the natives who lived nearest the coast and who brought to them the produce of the interior.

We shall not discuss the disputed claim of the French that they were the first Europeans to come to the Gold Coast in the fourteenth century. It is generally agreed that the first to arrive in any considerable numbers were the Portuguese. This they did at the instigation of a wise prince of the royal family of Portugal—Henry the Navigator. After visiting the coast annually for some years they

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determined to build a permanent fort in which they could reside for longer periods at once and in which they could collect and store their goods. This they did in the year 1482.

It is worth while to make careful note of the last quarter of the fifteenth century 1468-92, as it carries much significance for the inhabitants of the Gold Coast, and indeed of all West Africa. It was a time when great changes were taking place in the world. Nations everywhere, especially in Europe, seemed to be awaking as from a long sleep. It was the close of what is known as the Middle Ages. For us, three things are connected with this period. First, as was stated in the opening chapter, far away in the north of the Sudan the noble Abu Bekr was at the beginning of his beneficent career, having commenced his long reign over the Songhay empire in the year 1468. Second, about this time, in the west of Europe, a great man called Christopher Columbus was studying the Atlantic Ocean and making preparations to cross it. After waiting some years, he obtained three ships and sailed away on that memorable voyage over the unexplored sea in which he discovered, in 1492, the continent of America. Third, in the year 1482, Elmina Castle was built.

What has been the outcome of these three events ? The answer to this question ought to be carefully pondered by every thoughtful African who really loves his own race. The first event was a failure and ended in disaster. The second was a glorious

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success and ended in the triumph of a wise, patient, and courageous man. The final result of the third has not yet been settled.

What has led to these different results? Abu Bekr made the mistake of turning to the East and of making an alliance in Egypt with a dying empire. The result was that in a little over a hundred years his kingdom was ruined, and is now almost forgotten.

When Columbus discovered America he found a poor land inhabited by savages who were, if anything more primitive than the inhabitants of the Gold Coast. It is true that long ago, remarkable systems of civilisation existed in certain parts of the continent, but these were in a degenerate state and soon fell into decay. Yet what is America to-day? It now stands among the leading nations of the world. No country is richer, no country has more honour. What is the reason?

During the same period of time the Sudan peoples have been in contact with the Europeans. It must be acknowledged that they have made some progress. But have they made as much progress as they might have done? Any one who thinks carefully and judges impartially will be obliged to confess that what progress they have made, has been small and slow. Yet, in spite of many an error and set-back, they have not been ruined as were the Songhays. Is their day yet to come? If wisdom comes—we believe that day will come in full.

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That section of the Sudan peoples who owned allegiance to the bygone kingdom of Ghana, and who lived on the farthest edge of that ancient Negro empire, are, to-day, represented by the Fantis. These are an older people than the Ashantis and they had travelled farther afield, and, at the time of the building of Elmina Castle, were living in districts actually bordering, in some parts, on the sea coasts. Most probably their chief seats were near what is now known as Anamabu, but other tribes were scattered to the east and extended some distance inland.

This situation in which the Fantis are first found in historical times must not be set down to mere chance. The best explanation is found in the character of the Fantis themselves and of their subsequent career. Sometimes reasons have been sought in the supposed meaning of their name, but such explanations are based on fancy and guesswork. What is true is something which can be seen even at the present time. The Fantis are a venturesome people, and are not afraid to leave their homes. Even to this day let any town or district be open to them and before long Fantis are sure to be there. It might have been thought that the terrible traditions of the slave trade would have frightened them from ever going to America of their own free will. But perhaps more Fantis have crossed the Atlantic in search of education and the means of development than those of any other West African nation. There is no town along the whole coast in which a colony



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of Fantis cannot be found. Their first arrival at the sea coast from the interior, long ago, was in obedience to the same instinct and characteristic. By so doing they gained an advantage which in some respects, perhaps, brought them profit, but which, in other respects, caused them great loss. They became the object of envy on the part of the more interior peoples. Much of their history has its roots in the way they made use of their advantage and in the attacks made upon them by their envious neighbours.

When they first moved into the coast districts they did not find an empty region. They found other, weaker tribes already in possession, perhaps the remnants of the first wave of the human tide which for countless centuries had flowed across Africa through the Sudan. It is said that even now there are lingering descendants of such an old nation called the Adosenis. Of this nation we learn that the land about Elmina was occupied by a tribe called the Fetus and that that which is now called Cape Coast was held by the Asibu people. Between these two clans or tribes there was constant friction. This disunion it was which made them unable to resist the oncoming Fantis. For some reason the Fantis made common cause with the Asibus, and in process of time by intermarriage absorbed them, so that the Asibus are little more than a name now. This accounts for two facts, the long continued enmity between the Elminas and the Fantis of Cape Coast, which was an inheritance from the past and

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also that the inhabitants of the latter town are sometimes referred to as "Efutu" that is, the mixed people.

The union between the Fantis and the Asibus must have been very complete as we all know how, at the present time, Cape Coast is regarded as almost the sacred city of the Fantis. This shows that different tribes of the Gold Coast can unite. If the union could only have been more wide-spread, the history of the Western Sudan would have been very different and the progress of the Gold Coast might have been much more rapid and permanent.

As it is, the story will show how, instead of such desirable union taking place, there persisted, for centuries, quarrels and wars of which the enmity between Cape Coast and Elmina was only one example, albeit perhaps the most unreasonable. This disunity was permitted to grow and develop until it came to a climax in the disastrous strife between Fanti and Ashanti which ultimately involved the whole country in sad ruin.

At the time of the building of Elmina Castle the various tribes were small and scattered. Their towns were insignificant villages, nothing like the size to which many of them have since attained. In the west were the Apollonians, the Ahantas, Wassaws, Shamas and Kommendas. Beyond Saltpond to the east lay the villages of Appam, Winneba and Accra. A little inland lay Eguafu. Further inland still were the Akims and their kindred clans.

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One cause which doubtless helped to foster and perpetuate rivalry between the various tribes was the fact that the Europeans who came to trade belonged themselves to different nations. It would be tedious to relate in detail all the doings of these European merchants, but, in general, it may be said that the individual nations marked out for themselves separate sections of the coast. On these they erected forts or settlements, remains of which are standing to-day, some in perfect repair, as the castles of Sekondi, Elmina, Cape Coast, Accra, Christiansborg, Anamabu and Dixcove, while others are more or less in ruins as the fort at Kommenda.

The separate European nations were rivals in trade and competition between them was often very intense, leading, especially in the early days, to armed attacks on each other, which were carried out and resisted with much passion and ruthless determination. The Portuguese being the first comers claimed the sole right of trade and punished with death any others whom they caught trespassing, as they considered it, on their preserve.

Those merchants who succeeded in establishing themselves at different points on the coast naturally attracted to themselves the natives living in the neighbourhood and thus their influence tended to separate the inhabitants from each other. The story of the doings of these early traders is not an edifying one. Although it may be said that, to outward appearance, they brought wealth to the

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coast yet it is to be feared that, socially and morally, they did not help their African customers.

Even at the beginning of things the native chiefs and leaders perceived that contact with the white man would not work wholly for the welfare of their people. The story is told that when the Portuguese requested permission of Kwamina Ansa, the chief of Idina, to build their fort on the rock at the mouth of the river Benya they met with a refusal. Previous to that, the Portuguese had merely paid short visits each year, just long enough to exchange their goods for the gold of the land. In response to their request the chief asked why they could not be content to continue trading in that way. He feared that trouble would ensue if the Portuguese erected permanent buildings. From the description given of the dress of the chief and his attendants, it is evident that they were poor and knew little of the arts of civilised life. What clothing they had consisted of the skins of wild animals. Their weapons were spears and shields, bows and arrows. Some wore helmets of crocodile skin adorned with red shells, or with bunches of horse-hair. To their credit, it is stated that they did not, as the more savage peoples do, use poisoned arrows.

Though poor in material things the chief showed that he possessed wisdom and foresight. His fears of future friction and misunderstanding were well founded, as subsequent events abundantly proved. He was compelled, however, to give way to the superior force of the new-comers and, at last, yielded

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a reluctant consent. The Portuguese had come fully prepared with stones ready shaped and carpenters and masons in their ships, and in a short space of time the castle was erected pretty much as we see it to-day. It was named the castle of St. George of Elmina.

After a while merchants of other nations followed such as the French, Dutch, English and Danes. These imitated the example of the Portuguese and built for themselves castles or forts at the points where they settled. The origin of some of these later castles is not so clearly known as that of Elmina. This is especially the case with regard to the two larger castles of Cape Coast and Christiansborg. There is great probability that Cape Coast Castle was built by the English. The date is uncertain, but most likely it was 1662. If so, it shows how slowly progress was made. Elmina Castle had stood in solitary grandeur dominating the coast for nearly two centuries before its nearest rival was set up at Cape Coast.

During those two centuries, nevertheless, there had been ceaseless movement. The traders of other nations had given the Portuguese no rest from competition, and had gradually undermined their commerce. When Cape Coast Castle was built the Portuguese were no longer masters of the coast, and the flag which flew from the towers of Elmina was Dutch. The castle had been besieged and captured by that nation in 1637. For a time it seemed as if the Dutch were to become the leading nation on the

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coast. In 1666 they possessed forts at Elmina, Kormantin, Axim, Mori, Butri, Anamabu and Egya. Some of these they had taken from the English, from whom they also tried very hard, but without success, to wrest Cape Coast.

After losing Elmina the Portuguese endeavoured to retain their trade by building storehouses at Accra, which were afterwards enlarged and developed in 1650 into a fort known for many years as Crève Cœur. But the trade of the Portuguese gradually declined and before the century closed, 1693, Crève Cœur passed into the possession of the Dutch.

Probably the foundations of Christiansborg were laid by the Swedes in 1657. It is known, however, that in 1666 it was owned by the Danes. At that time there were three villages where Accra now stands—Soko, Little Accra, and Osu. On the site of what is now called James Town, then Soko, the English built a fort and named it after one of their kings, James II. In the far west also, a fort at Sekondi was built by the Dutch and named Fort Orange, and near to this another was erected by the English. Thus did the separate sets of traders press upon one another's heels.

CHAPTER IV

THE CAUSE OF STRIFE

SUCH was the general position of affairs on the coast when, at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century a change took place, chiefly brought about by the rise of Ashanti causing attention to be paid to what was happening in the interior. Up to that time trade had been carried on through the agency of those who dwelt in the immediate neighbourhood of the sea. These coast people were able to make great profits by acting as middlemen or agents between the Europeans and the natives of the interior. In time, those who dwelt further inland found this out and began to raise objection. Much trouble was caused by the jealousy of the middlemen of the coast who did all they could to keep the trade in their own hands and prevent anyone else from sharing in the profits which came to them.

The condition of affairs was made unsatisfactory by at least three things. First, as has been said, the people who lived nearest the sea were continually striving to hinder the men of the inland tribes from dealing directly with the European merchants. This created a spirit of bitterness and was the cause

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of quarrels and wars between the coast men and those of the inland towns. It is most probable that this was one of the causes of the war between the Denkeras and the Ashantis. Second, the inhabitants of the various coast towns attached themselves to different European nations from whom they obtained special privileges. The Elminas gave their allegiance to the Dutch who held Elmina Castle ; the people of Cape Coast considered themselves to belong to the English, those at Christiansborg to the Danes, and so on. This led to discord between the coast towns and was doubtless one of the reasons of the long-continued enmity and ill-feeling between the inhabitants of Cape Coast and those of Elmina. Third, much of the trade was in slaves. No country that deals in slaves ever remains strong. Some individual persons may make money, and become rich for a time by selling other men, but in the end, their nation becomes weak. As well expect a man who inflicts wounds on his own body to remain healthy and strong, as imagine that a nation which sells slaves will remain prosperous and happy.

It is difficult to say who was most responsible for the slave trade in the Western Sudan. Was it the natives who captured and sold each other, or was it the Europeans who bought the unfortunate captives ? The inhabitants of the Sudan made slaves of the weaker people nearer the coast long before the Europeans came. As a rule the Europeans did not hunt or catch the slaves. They

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bought them when they were brought to their forts. It would seem that in those days men had not learnt that it was wrong to trade in human beings. They were willing to trade in any article so long as it brought them gain.

Osei Tutu, though a great man and a wise ruler, was not in advance of his time with regard to the question of slavery. Few or no people ever thought in his day of making it a question. Ages before he was born his ancestors had made slaves of the poorer and weaker people, both of his own country and of others. He saw nothing wrong in it. At great festivals it was customary to put men and women to death as sacrifices and slaves were required for that purpose. When he heard that the white men would buy slaves, though not in order to put them to death, it simply meant more trade and more wealth. It was more profitable to sell slaves than to kill them. And, of course, he was wise enough to know that his profits would be larger if he could sell slaves to the Europeans direct, and if he could buy guns, lead, salt and cloth from them without the people of the coast towns coming between him and them. Hence he was continually trying to win an open road to the sea. That was why he sought the mastery over the Denkeras. That was why his successors quarrelled with the Fantis. That was why he valued the Elmina "note" more than all the other booty captured on the field of battle. The same reason prompted him to take care to keep friendly with the Elminas.

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The policy initiated by Osei Tutu was continued by his successors with constantly renewed efforts. These efforts often failed, yet, such was the energy put forth by the irrepressible Ashantis that, in process of time, they began to focus upon themselves the attention of all the other sections of the Gold Coast peoples. Henceforward almost every movement or event that occurred on the coast had some relation to this vigorous nation, the people of which, by their gift of military discipline, were able to make their power felt in places far distant from their own country.

Their supremacy was not due to the degeneracy or weakness of their opponents ; for again and again they had to assert their rule by the sword. At the death of almost every Ashanti king, subject states would revolt and endeavour to re-establish their independence. Thus the successor of the great Tutu, Opoku Wari, who was distinguished for his tall stature, found that his first duty was to reconquer Assin and Denkera. These countries thought that, now that the founder of Ashanti's greatness was dead, they could safely throw off the yoke. They were soon undeceived and they discovered that the spirit of the dead ruler had passed into his people. Under Opoku, the well-drilled Ashanti army reoccupied the revolted countries and the conquest of Akim which Tutu had left half-completed when he met his fate, was thoroughly carried out.

In the course of the campaign against the Akims an acquisition was made similar to that which was

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secured by the Ashantis when they first overcame the Denkeras. The rent-notes of the Accra forts and of the castle at Christiansborg came into their possession. In virtue of these the Ashantis secured a second point of contact with the sea.

During this reign the boundaries of their empire were extended northward as well as southward. Brong, Gonja and Dagomba were invaded. For the first time the Ashantis crossed the river Volta in which expedition Prang was conquered. One after another such chiefdoms as Attabubu, Gyaman, Buron were reduced to submission. Anio, king of Tekiman, held out for a time, but at length he, too, had to yield. Opoku also strengthened his position by forming an alliance with Nkoranza which lay to the north. This was an example of a method of extending their power of which the rulers of Ashanti were accustomed to make their boast, namely, that they never sought to impose their rule by war if other means could be used. They preferred to achieve their ends by negotiation and diplomacy and only had resort to military force when their trade or national security was threatened. In proof of this it will be seen that nearly all their wars were with those tribes which lay between them and the sea and who, by their position, were naturally jealous of the claim of Ashanti to deal directly with the European merchants.

That the Ashantis were not merely freebooters, living only to oppress their neighbours, but that they took pride in the way their civil affairs were

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conducted and desired that these should be carried on in accordance with established law is shown by an event which occurred towards the end of Opoku's victorious reign. It often happens when a monarch is successful in war that he desires to make changes in the system of government. Rich people desire more wealth, powerful kings desire more power. So it was with Opoku. He felt that the old laws and customs were a hindrance. Possibly he desired to be able to keep an army always ready to move in any direction he desired and quickly. The ancient laws of the people did not allow this, and the proud king chafed under the restriction and became impatient. In the original constitution of Ashanti the power of the king was limited by certain rights and privileges which were exercised by the chiefs and war-captains. Before any important action, such as a war, could be undertaken, these chiefs had to be consulted. Relying upon the immense prestige which he had gained by his many victories, the King ventured to draw up a new code of laws by which these rights and privileges of the nobles were curtailed and the prerogative or personal power of the King was extended. This step aroused much resentment and only the commanding influence of the King's personality prevented the chiefs from openly resisting the changes. As it was, Opoku died in 1742, before the new constitution was thoroughly established.

The offended and jealous aristocracy refused to confirm the new king's accession until he promised

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to repeal the new laws of Opoku and revert to the old manner of carrying on the government. They were able to do this because, by the ancient custom of Ashanti, no king could assume power until he was placed on the golden stool of Tutu in the presence of all the allied chiefs, who formed the Kotoko or principal council of the nation. If any chief was absent or not properly represented the enthronement was not considered legal.

The new king was a man who is referred to by two different names, a practice which was frequently observed. He is known as Kwesi Bodom or Kusi Buaduru. The former title refers to the custom which he introduced of wearing a string of pearls or precious stones suspended from his neck. This custom is still observed by many chiefs on state occasions. Evidently Kwesi, though he was compelled to surrender some of the authority which his predecessor had exercised, still clung to the outward symbols of it. It often happens that when persons have not much real power they pay more attention to external display. His other name, however, Kusi Buaduru, is declared by many old Ashanti men, who preserve the knowledge of the history of their nation, to have been his proper name. If so, it doubtless was given to him on account of his bodily strength.

The increasing fame of Ashanti had for some time caused anxiety to another kingdom in the east and aroused its jealousy. This kingdom was Dahomey. At the instigation of the king of this

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country some of the subject chiefdoms, lying between the two countries, rose in rebellion, namely Kwahu, Akim and Buron. The Dahomian monarch thought that if there were independent tribes between his country and Ashanti, then his country would be safer from invasion. He desired to form what is called a "buffer state" between himself and Kumasi. The rebellious chiefdoms were however subdued and forced to submit to Ashanti. The action of the king of Dahomey then brought upon him the very thing which he had feared, an Ashanti invasion. Kusi Buaduru led his army forward, after having suppressed the revolted chiefs, to punish Dahomey for its interference. In this attempt however he met with a disastrous defeat, and Dahomey never came under the dominion of Ashanti. Kusi only reigned ten years, dying in 1752.

CHAPTER V

THE FANTIS

WHILE the vigour of the nations of Denkera and Ashanti had been manifesting itself in their efforts to extend their power over each other and to reach the sea, the tribes on the coast had not been quiet. Something of the same striving after increased strength, and the same desire to grow and develop, made itself manifest along the sea-border, only in this case, it seemed to be less conscious of itself. It was not marked by the same foresight and definite aim which distinguished the movements of the interior peoples. There was not the same unity of purpose, there was less discipline, less organisation, less submission to an acknowledged head.

This difference can perhaps be accounted for by three facts. First, the maritime tribes were, by virtue of their position, already on the coast and in constant contact with the European merchants. The avenues of commerce and the sources of wealth were at their doors. No nation intervened between them and the foreign traders. Consequently they were in that respect quite satisfied. Second, as is well known, material wealth ministers to selfishness

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By reason of the fact that the traders belonged to different nations of Europe, the people of any one locality thought more of attaching themselves to the separate merchants than of combining with their neighbours. This caused them to fall apart from one another and was the source of mutual antagonisms. Their ambitions did not lead them to stand by each other so as to build up and develop their unity as a nation. Third, while they had no nation to contend with in order to reach the sea, they had to act on the defensive against those of the interior who envied them their privileged position. Mere defence does not call forth the qualities of fore-thought and organised preparation, as does the undertaking of a predetermined enterprise. When attacked, they made use of what means they found ready to their hands to drive off their enemies, but, when once these were repelled, they imagined that the danger was over and turned again to the enjoyment of their increasing wealth.

Nevertheless, there was one of the nations dwelling near the sea which did succeed in achieving a measure of leadership and prestige among its neighbours. This was the Fanti people. Originally this section of the Akan race had its seat near Anamabu, and almost limited by that town and Mankesim, stretching inland as far as the Iron Hills. In the course of time, however, we find the Fantis exercising authority both east and west of this locality, eastwards beyond Winneba nearly to Accra, westwards as far as Sekondi.



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Fanti influence over these districts was obtained not so much by armed conquest as by their innate character and habit of colonisation. From early times the Fantis showed a genius for travel and for establishing themselves in towns far from home. Perhaps that is the reason why they reached the coast sooner than the other branches of the Akan race and formed the most distant outpost of the ancient empire of Ghana.

They speedily impressed their power upon the outworn tribes whom they found immediately to the east of them such as the Etsiis, who had their dwellings near Simpa, or Winneba, as it is now called, and the Agunas whose land lies inland. Westwards, their progress was not so rapid, but it was not the less real. At Ogua, or Cape Coast, they met a people who for long resisted their domination. The traces of this are seen in the still living tradition that the Cape Coast people are a mixed race, recognised by the Fantis themselves by their habit of referring to them as the Efutu, a term which means "mixed people." Whether the origin of the term, however, is from its meaning, or is a corruption of "Fetu," the name of the original holders of the land, is uncertain.

The force by which the Fantis achieved their position as the leading tribe on the sea-board was doubtless that of the mind rather than force of arms. They were readier to perceive and profit by the opportunities of wealth brought to their land by the advent of the merchants from over-seas. What

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is now called Cape Coast was, to them, Oqua, a market, in the operations of which they proved themselves more skilled than the backward aborigines. Then again, they were not content, as were the Ashantis, to exercise power from a distance by virtue of the issue of a pitched battle. The Ashantis were accustomed to invade a country and overcome the inhabitants in a decisive fight, after which they retired to their own land. Instead of this, a colony of Fantis would emigrate and settle in the midst of another tribe, intermarrying with them, yet retaining their own identity, gradually introducing their customs, and at last making their language supreme. A striking instance of this can be seen at the present day in Lagos where there is a large number of Fantis who hold themselves together and adhere to their own distinctive dress, frequently meeting together, and clinging to the use of their own tongue.

One of the most remarkable phenomena on the west coast is the widespread use of the Fanti language. Even the people of Elmina, who for centuries maintained an attitude of enmity and antagonism to the Fantis, nevertheless adopted their language. This cannot have happened by any conventional arrangement, but may be assigned to two causes. First, in the remote past, the Fanti people must have exerted a close personal influence over the inhabitants of Idina. This influence, unhappily for the Fantis, before they had gained a complete ascendancy as at Cape Coast, was disturbed by the incoming of other people attracted by the

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gold found in the neighbourhood. Yet, second, in spite of that, the superiority of the Fanti speech asserted itself over the ruder dialects of the decadent originals. There is great probability that this spread of the Fanti speech is not yet at an end. Now that the whole of the interior is thrown open to those who are willing to pursue the paths of peaceful commerce, colonies of Fantis are to be found in every important centre of population, even in the once hated and feared Kumasi. The Fantis have gifts of mind which show themselves especially in music and speech, so that it is not at all unlikely that, in time to come, the superior clearness and sweetness of tone of their language will compel acceptance everywhere in the Gold Coast. Even in Accra, although inhabited by the vigorous Gâ people, a race which the Akans never overcame, and whose language is structurally different, the common speech owes a large part of its vocabulary to words of Fanti origin.

This practice of sending out companies of colonisers who imposed their customs upon the tribes amidst whom they settled, accounts for the fact that the Fantis never constituted one homogeneous nation, acknowledging one central authority, as did their Ashanti cousins. The nearest approach which they made to this was to form a loose confederation of independent chiefdoms. Other nations have had the same experience in their relations to outsiders as had the Fantis and Ashantis. Although very different in many respects, yet in

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this matter of colonisation and relation to central government these two branches of the Akan race might be compared to the Greeks and Romans, who were likewise cousins, being members of a common ancestral people, the Aryan race. The Greeks were the older nation and spread their influence more by commerce and language than by war. They sent out colonies far and wide, the people of which carried their customs and language with them. But these colonies tended to separate themselves from their original home and never fully acknowledge one central authority. The consequence was that the Greek empire did not last long, in fact some would say it never became an empire at all, being always divided into separate states. The Romans, however, when they sent out colonies, always respected the mother city and acknowledged her rule. The consequence was that the Roman empire became very strong and endured for centuries. The British also, of modern days, are a colonising race, as everybody knows. But although there was a time when England was divided into separate tribes, as in the period of what is called the Saxon Heptarchy, or even when England, Scotland and Ireland were separate, yet they did not send out colonies until the kingdom at home was thoroughly united. The result is that though the colonies are very widely separated by distance yet they are strongly united through their common love and loyalty to the central power at home.

If the Fantis and Ashantis had known history and,

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by learning its lessons, had been able to see this great principle of unity, how different would their history have been ! Or if even the Fantis could have held together themselves. But these things were apparently hidden from their eyes. They had no prophets or statesmen to teach them to look to the future. They had only deceivers like fetish priests who blindly bound them to the dark gloom of outworn, unmeaning customs. There was a time, however, when the king of Abura was regarded as the nominal head of the confederation, but his power was more sentimental than real. A town like Mankesim was considered to be a sort of central sacred city. But on the least excuse each chief acted for himself and owned no responsibility to any central power, preferring to follow his own apparently immediate interests with no thought of the future.

Herein lay their weakness. Could they have been welded together into one kingdom, under one ruler, and guided by a leader conscious of a settled aim, able to plan and deny themselves for the sake of the future, there is no doubt that this nation would, long before now, have travelled far on the path of progress. In their political instincts, or what represents political instincts in their case, the Fantis formed the antithesis of the Ashantis. Each seemed to possess what the other lacked. The Ashantis were held together by a stringent military discipline by dint of which they carried their victorious arms far afield. Throughout the eighteenth century the

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territory ruled by Kumasi increased greatly in extent in every direction. But the Ashantis were not colonisers. They were content to impose a tribute upon their subjects and to leave a representative of the central authority in the conquered country whose duty it was to see that the tax was duly paid. No attempt was made to exert personal influence. They never sought to intermingle with the people whom they subdued.

In this, it may be, they were simply following the traditional precedent of the ancient empire of which they themselves once formed a province. The government of the Ghana empire was administered by a system of viceroys or "kois" of which it is said there were no less than thirty. The "koi" of a province was often even a native of the country which he ruled in the name of the monarch at Walata. There is good reason for thinking that this practice was one of the causes why, in time, the empire fell apart.

Whether this be the origin of the Ashanti method of government or not, it is certain that it was owing to this method that the different parts of their empire were so often in rebellion. The first task which confronted a new king was, as has already been stated, to re-conquer one or more revolted provinces. Thus it may be said that the Ashantis were able to conquer, but could not govern distant provinces, while the Fantis had the talent for administration of separate parts, but lacked the

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military genius to conquer and weld the parts into one whole.

In another way did the Fanti weakness bear fruit unwelcome to themselves from a patriotic point of view. The commerce which they carried on with the Europeans along the sea-board was not always characterised by that spirit, which should inform all true trade, that is, honest and fair dealing. The Europeans frequently found that they had to deal with a people who were very alert and even cunning in their methods of trade. In the annals of the period covered by the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, frequent mention is found of attempts made by the Fantis and other coast natives, to defraud the merchants by adulterating their gold or by demanding higher prices for their goods than were justified by the circumstances. In the end, as always happens, such dishonesty overreached itself. It soon became plain to the Europeans that a people who practised such methods did not know the meaning and value of trust, either in themselves or in those with whom they dealt. Then, of necessity, they were compelled to be on their guard and to take steps to protect themselves against the consequences of such deceit and lack of trust.

The steps taken were of two kinds. First, the buildings, which were erected originally as store-houses and collecting sheds, were made very strong for purposes of defence and ultimately became fortresses or castles such as are seen at Accra, Cape Coast or Elmina to-day. Into these forts the

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Europeans withdrew and separated themselves from the natives. Second, experience taught the newcomers that the people who cared so little to preserve the trust of the Europeans were not accustomed to have confidence in each other. Moreover, although not all the Europeans were men of noble and upright character, yet many of them were, and gradually the natives realised that on the whole the white man dealt justly with them. Thus it came about that a custom arose, in their many quarrels amongst themselves, of referring matters for settlement to the Europeans who dwelt in the strong forts by the waterside.

When they realised what was happening they were not pleased, but they were unable to prevent affairs taking the course in which events were moving. Thus on one occasion one of the headmen of Cape Coast defrauded Mr. John Swanzy, an influential merchant, by selling him some adulterated gold. The Englishman knew that he would not be able to get justice before a native tribunal so the man was seized and taken to the castle before the governor, who imprisoned him. The inhabitants of the town, stirred up by their leaders, began to attack the fort, but it was too strong for them. The foresight of the merchants in fortifying it was justified. Guns were fired upon the town and several houses were destroyed and the natives were obliged to submit to justice. Again in 1805, some canoemen of Accra stole a quantity of gunpowder. They were brought to Cape Coast and punished by

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imprisonment in the castle. A united people, accustomed to rely upon each other for mutual help, would have known that unfairness and distrust are among the worst diseases of human society and would never have had to submit to overruling by outsiders. But gradually as years went on, the Europeans acquired more and more authority and prestige over the tribes in the neighbourhood of their trading stations. This was especially the case with the British who, in the end, became the dominant power all along the coast though with many fluctuations and not always of set purpose.

There is no doubt that the growth of the British authority was due to the political weakness and internal quarrels of the tribes, who ought to have united into one under the Fanti name. The habit which grew up of relying on the power of the white man fostered the same weakness so that when the time came for the inevitable struggle between Ashanti and Fanti, the latter were unable to maintain their position. At the same time, it must not be inferred that, if the course of events had been otherwise, the Fantis would have been able to overcome their assailants. All that can be truly said is just a statement of the bare facts. These are that, in order to save the Fantis from destruction, the British at last put forth their strength and acting as a nation, imposed their power upon the hinterland as well as upon the coast, so bringing about a condition of things in which the whole Gold Coast might dwell together in peace and learn the lessons

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of civilisation and history until the spirit of disunity and distrust be driven out, and the Negroes acquire the faculty of standing together in mutual helpfulness which is the true secret of political strength.

CHAPTER VI

THE REVOLT OF ASSIN

THE history of the Gold Coast during the nineteenth century is concerned almost entirely with the struggle between Ashanti and Fanti for the mastery of the sea-coast or rather, perhaps, it should be described as between the Ashantis on the one hand and the British on the other, in defence of the Fantis. The story is a long one and has many obscure phases, and episodes not altogether clear. The struggle was not continuous but, with intervals of quiet, kept coming to a crisis time after time, until, at last, the British were led to the conviction that no half-measures would ever succeed and that one or the other of the opposing parties must assume supreme authority. Once that was understood, there was no question which nation it would be. Against Britain, fully aroused, with all her resources, no West African people could hope to stand, did it only know the true position of things. The tragic pity of the situation lay in the ignorance of the Ashantis concerning the power with which they had to deal. They persisted in arguing from their own view of things and as events showed, had to learn by suffering.

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Yet in the course of the long-drawn-out contest, not all the glory was on the side of the Europeans. They, too, sometimes, acted in ignorance of the African character and did things which do not reflect credit on them. On several occasions it would seem that the Ashantis had right on their side, and if they had been treated with strict regard to honour the result might have been different. The clash may have been inevitable, yet one cannot but wish that the ostensible cause of it had been one for which the more civilised nation need have felt no shame. At the same time it should be remembered that the motives of political actions are often extremely complicated. It should not be forgotten that the British had to deal with a people who were ignorant and primitive and given to practice many cruel and inhuman customs, and that very often it was a question of balancing merely abstract legal rights against the wider common-sense claims of humanity.

It is said that the British first came into contact with the Ashantis about the middle of the eighteenth century. Kusi Buaduru died in 1752, and was succeeded by his nephew Osei Kodjo, who reigned nearly thirty years. As happened with almost every new king, the subject kingdoms broke away in revolt. In the first years of his reign Kodjo had to reconquer even the earliest acquisitions of his great ancestor Tutu. The Denkeras, whose country was the first conquest of the Ashanti power, revolted and were joined in their rebellion by

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the Gyamans in the north, and by the Tufels and Wassaws in the south. To win these provinces back to their allegiance taxed the strength of Ashanti to the utmost, although, in the end, Kodjo triumphed. But he was unable to attack Dahomey as was his wish, in revenge for the defeat which his predecessor had suffered, and he was glad to make terms of peace without further war.

Later on, however, he invaded the country of the Akims which lay to the south-east of his kingdom. Tradition says that in this expedition the Ashantis and the Fantis together fought as allies against Akim. If so, it was surely the first time that they did so. The power of Akim was destroyed, 1764, but soon afterwards a quarrel arose between the victors, probably over the division of the spoils. Perhaps, even then, there was a consciousness that neither of the two nations could tolerate the power of the other, although it is likely that neither of them fully understood the character and relative strength of each other. Henceforward they gradually tended to become the two opposing foci or centres round which the stream of history of the Gold Coast revolved, until they were both brought to submit to the overlordship of the British in one government, which although having its seat in Accra, a town which is neither Ashanti nor Fanti, has still to recognise that the two chief elements of the Gold Coast peoples are just these Fantis and Ashantis who so long struggled for supremacy, each in their own characteristic way.

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King Kodjo died in 1781, being followed by Osei Kwami. The new king was immediately faced with a rebellion of the Assins. Having brought them to submission he sought to weaken their power by dividing their country into three parts under separate chiefs. This act of diplomacy was destined to exert great influence upon the succeeding history of Ashanti, as will be seen hereafter. Kwami was evidently a man who could think, and he saw that it was possible to improve the position of his country by other means than by fighting and cruelty. During his reign we first hear of an attempt to mitigate the cruelty of the human sacrifices which were so long a reproach to the social customs of Ashanti. Kwami endeavoured to put an end to many of these barbarous and revolting practices, but in this he was in advance of the opinion of his age, and offended the majority of his chiefs who caused him to be deposed in 1797. Like many men who try to make things better than they find them and to lead their people on the path of progress, Kwami was misunderstood and had to suffer because of the backwardness of his fellows. He was the first of a series of three brothers who ruled Ashanti in succession, and who all showed signs of being men of more than ordinary ability and understanding. If the Fantis could only have united with Ashanti at this time as some of their leaders seemed inclined to do, they might have afforded such support by their votes on the great council as would have retained the reformer Kwami

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in power and strengthened him and his brothers in their endeavours after higher morality and more humane customs.

Kwami was succeeded by his brother Opoku II., but he only reigned two years, being followed by another brother, Tutu Kwami, in 1799. This Tutu Kwami, both in name and character, resembled the great Tutu who first laid the foundations of Ashanti power. Indeed, he is considered by many to have been the greatest of those whose names are on the roll of Ashanti rulers.

The opening years of his reign were occupied by the usual task of re-conquering rebellious provinces. By his skill and vigour as a military leader he was able to restore the authority of his stool, and soon after the new century began he could claim to be the overlord of the whole of what is now known as the Gold Coast, with the exception of the strip of land immediately adjoining the sea. Even there Ashanti had two firm footholds at Elmina and Accra.

In 1805 occurred an event which casts a light upon the character of the authority which Ashanti exercised over her subject provinces. It also gave rise to the first stage of the long struggle between the Ashantis and Fantis which in the end was taken up by the British on behalf of the latter and ended in the suppression of the Ashanti power and the establishment of British rule over both peoples.

The province of Assin which lay to the south of Ashanti, on either side of the river Prah, consisted of three chiefdoms, having been so divided by Osei

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Kwami in 1783. These divisions were governed by the Chiefs, Tsibu Kweku, Aputé and Amu. A dispute arose between the two latter over a theft of gold which had been committed by one of Aputé's followers. As Aputé would not accede to the demands of Amu that the thief should be punished and the gold restored, the case was referred to their overlord in Kumasi. The King summoned the chiefs of the western half of Assin, Tsibu and Aputé to appear before him. Tsibu was an old man and begged to be excused on account of his age. Aputé, however, obeyed the summons and the case was tried before Tutu Kwami who decided in favour of Amu. Aputé was placed under arrest and ordered to remain in Kumasi until the stolen gold had been repaid. In a short while he escaped, and once safe, as he thought, in his own town, he refused to submit to the king's judgment.

This judgment was clearly a just and fair one, and there is no doubt that Aputé knew that it was so. Why did he refuse to submit? The reason was that behind the dispute about the stolen gold there was unwillingness to be under the dominion of Ashanti. The Assins, indeed, claimed they were the original clan from whom the Ashantis sprang, and that they ought to rule over Ashanti, not Ashanti over them. We shall see, later on, that the Assins played a curious part in the later course of events which, at first sight, is somewhat difficult to explain unless we bear in mind this jealousy and ambition of theirs. It was no doubt because of this that Osei

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Kwami took the step which he did in dividing their country into three parts. He knew how dangerous they were to his supremacy. At the same time the Assassins were wrong in thinking that because they were the older people they ought to have the power. The world is governed by men who perform deeds which influence the future, not by those who dream about the past. It was Ashanti which had produced leaders like Tutu and Kwami. We do not hear of Assin bringing forth any great men equal to these in sagacity and leadership.

As Aputé refused to submit to the king of Kumasi's judgment and restore the gold to Amu, the latter took up arms and made war upon Aputé. Doubtless in doing so he thought he would gain favour with Tutu Kwami and perhaps be made chief of the whole province. In the first battle Amu defeated Aputé, but in a second fight Aputé's forces were assisted by those of Tsibu and Amu was overcome and driven to the river. The fighting was continued for some months, first one side gaining the advantage and then the other. At last the king sent orders that the three chiefs should all lay down their arms and appear before his tribunal in Kumasi. Amu expressed his willingness to do so, but the other two refused. This of course meant not only that they declined to accept the judgment of king Tutu Kwami, but that they rejected his rule altogether. Instead of obeying his request they again attacked and routed Amu's army and, in order that there should be no mistake as to their intentions, they put

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to death some Ashanti messengers whom they found in Amu's camp. These messengers had with them as signs of their authority, the state swords and the golden axe of Kumasi. These were seized and carried away as booty.

As soon as he heard of this act of defiance, Tutu Kwami at once raised a large army and marched against the rebellious chiefs. Two battles were fought, one at Ansa and the second at Miassa, which had been the capital of Assin in the days of its former independence. In both these battles the Assins were defeated and their army dispersed. Aputé and Tsibu fled to the south across the Prah to Asikuma, an independent chiefdom lying between Assin and the districts which were regarded as Fanti territory.

The Fanti provinces were never united under one acknowledged head as was the case in Ashanti. The nearest they ever attained to political unity was to form a kind of association, the principal members of which were the chiefs of Abura, Mankesim and Anamabu. There were other smaller chiefdoms which were too jealous of their independence to join even this loose association. Of these Asikuma was one, lying to the north of the coast districts and, although under the influence of the Fantis, was not fully incorporated with their system.

As soon as the Ashanti king heard where the rebel chiefs were, he sent messengers and a present to Nkum, chief of Asikuma, with a request that the fugitives might be given up to him. Flattered, no

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doubt, by the gifts and courtesy of the great king, Nkum was inclined to accede to his request. But before he could surrender them, Tsibu and Aputé escaped to the nearest chiefdom of Fanti proper and took refuge at the court of Atta, chief of Abura.

The energetic will of Tutu Kwami would not be thwarted and he pursued them thither. Sending an embassy similar to that which he had sent to Nkum he demanded from Atta permission for his soldiers to cross Fanti territory in pursuit of his enemies. A council of the principal Fanti chiefs was summoned before which the king's request was laid. The matter was debated at great length. Perhaps the chiefs realised that it was no unimportant occasion. They knew the ambition of Ashanti and feared that if the king once entered their lands with an army he might seek to remain as master. At length the decision was taken which was destined to influence greatly the fortunes of the Gold Coast peoples. Thus do great events arise out of small causes. The covetous man who committed the miserable theft from the grave of Amu's friend little dreamt that his wicked act would lead to the sufferings and death of untold multitudes of innocent persons, and the ultimate destruction of the Ashanti kingdom. The theft brought about the quarrel of Amu and Aputé, which led to the rebellion and flight of Aputé and Tsibu, which was the cause of the summoning of the council of the Fanti chiefs at Abura.

This council at Abura may be regarded as one of

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the turning-points in the history of the land. Had there been a prophet present then, who was able to foretell the future, what a terrible story he would have had to declare. Well might the stoutest hearts amongst them have quailed and shrunk for fear. They did not know, however, what tremendous forces their decision would let loose that day. Immediately before them, at the very entrance of their country, was the imperious ruler of Ashanti with his victorious army. They may have despised the Ashantis as ignorant barbarians of the interior and thought that, with their superior knowledge, helped perhaps by a few white men, they would be able to resist and drive them back. They had not yet learnt their own fatal weakness of disunity and mutual distrust. Then in the dark background there was the strange, unknown power of Britain, the power which moved slowly, and whose motives and intentions they did not comprehend, the power which to them seemed then only like a small cloud upon the horizon beyond the sea, but which was destined to grow and develop until it should overspread all the land, both theirs and that of Ashanti. They did not know these things that day or perhaps they would have shrunk from coming to a decision so fateful to their people. But a decision had to be taken, and when once men decide, the step cannot be retraced nor its consequences changed.

CHAPTER VII

THE COUNCIL OF ABURA

THE scene may readily be imagined. Early in the morning the three leading chiefs of Abura, Mankesim and Anamabu assembled with their several retinues in the spacious courtyard of the Chief of Abura's dwelling-house. This courtyard, while open to the air, was shaded by the branches of a huge tree which grew in the centre. In fact the courtyard had the appearance of having been built around the wide-spreading tree.

Abura, as nominal head, sat in the centre near one wall with Mankesim on his right hand and Anamabu on his left, each beneath a many-coloured umbrella flaunting its vivid hues in the morning sun. At the foot of each chief sat or crouched his sword-bearers holding erect the quaint, broad-bladed symbols of authority. The absence of any thoroughly acknowledged power was apparent in the jealous glances and rude jostling of the councillors and attendants who struggled to arrange themselves in a semicircle behind their respective chiefs. A coloured thread or handkerchief round the brows of the leaders proclaimed their high rank. The king of Abura

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sought to set forth his superior dignity by wearing a cap made of leopard skin to which were attached plates of gold, and which was surmounted by a small knot of gold wires, imitative of a horse's tail.

The gathering was effected with much clamour and beating of drums which had heralded each king's approach. We will not attempt to describe those other rites which were performed before the door of the courtyard. Dark and cruel they were, involving much bloodshed and expressive of gloomy superstition which we would hope are now things of a vanished past, best forgotten and never to be recalled.

As soon as the gathering had settled into something like order, a message was sent to the Ashanti ambassador that the Fanti chiefs were prepared to receive him and to hear his message. Before long a renewed clamour of drums announced his approach, and eventually he took his place in the cleared space before the seated chiefs. The ambassador was clothed as befitting his rank, in a gorgeous silk toga, and accompanied by attendants to guard his person. On his breast was a broad plate of gold, the sign of his authority as direct representative of his master the great king.

Lifting his robe so as to uncover his feet and slipping it down so as to lay bare his left shoulder he made a stately bow to the chiefs, who coldly acknowledged the salute by bending slightly forward, but remained seated. This done he made the circuit of the assembly and touched the hand of

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each chief in turn. This etiquette having been observed he returned to his position in the centre of what had now become a crowd, sightseers having pressed in behind to see what was to be seen.

Standing proudly erect he requested permission to speak and this being granted he pointed to the gold plate on his breast, as indicative of his authority, and proceeded to deliver a long harangue, too long for us to reproduce, a large part of it being devoted to extolling the glory and power of his master the king of Ashanti. In substance this is what he said :

“ My noble master, the great king of the sacred city of Kumasi, he who sits upon the golden stool of the glorious Osei Tutu, he who commands soldiers in countless thousands invincible in their courage, who know not the meaning of defeat, has sent me to you, you chiefs of Fanti. He desires to live in peace with all men, wishing only that his lawful subjects live in proper subjection to his authority, enjoying the blessings of his rule. As a sign of his friendship and good feeling towards you he has sent you these few presents which he begs that you will accept, and agree to join in peace and love with him.

“ Lately two chiefs of his province of Assin have dared in their folly to disobey his commands and to rebel against him, their rightful lord. Several times he sent loving messages to these his undutiful servants, desiring to win them back by reason and justice. This kindness was met by insolence. His messengers were slain, and at last the king was compelled to despatch an army against his rebellious

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subjects. Unable to resist the soldiers of their king these chiefs fled and are now living in hiding in the town of Ogua beside the sea. The king has no land in this part and sends therefore these presents asking that you will agree to open your roads to him so that his soldiers may pass through to Ogua, capture those wrongdoers, Tsibu and Aputé, and return. The king swears that his soldiers shall not loiter nor stay in your land, but will return speedily. If you grant him the permission which he now asks he will live only to be your loving brother and faithful ally to all time."

This speech was delivered in a loud, strident voice, and when the speaker ceased a silence fell upon the meeting. In a short while the lips of the chief of Mankesim were seen to move, but only a faint sound was audible. A moment afterwards a man standing by his side, with a tall staff in his hand, stepped forward and said : "The chief of Mankesim, which is the most ancient of the Fanti cities, asks if it is not true that Assin is an older tribe than Ashanti, and that if justice were done it is the chief of Assin who would be king across the river and not the chief of Kumasi."

While this question was being asked the chiefs of Abura and Anamabu shot glances of contempt at their brother of Mankesim and sat more erect on their stools with stiffened pride. The smile which curled their lips was intensified by the scornful answer of the Ashanti envoy. It was well known that Mankesim thought it ought to be leader of the

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Fantis, because of its traditional claim to be the most ancient town.

“We in Ashanti have heard this talk before, many a time and oft, since the great Tutu went forth and overcame our enemies. It may be that Assin is the older tribe. Such is the tale which old men and women tell us. But why did not the Assins take the lead in battle when our foes in ancient days hemmed us in on every side? If the victorious and wise Tutu had held back it would not have been the Ashantis who would now bear rule, but the crafty Denkeras, and what would the Assins, who are so proud of their past, have said then? It is not they who dream and prate of their past who rule men, but those who arouse themselves and do and dare great deeds for the future.”

The chief of Mankesim felt the rebuke and shrank back in his seat ashamed before the titters of the audience.

“Leave us now, my friend,” said the chief of Abura, “while we discuss amongst ourselves the request which your master has made.”

The Ashanti ambassador bowed and retired followed by his retinue, all save one who managed to slip into a dark corner unobserved, and remain to hear and report all that should be said in council, that his master might know who were his friends and who were not.

When silence had been restored the chief of Abura, as the president of the court, first gave his opinion. He first of all expressed his annoyance at

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having to make any decision, as, whichever step was taken, he feared there would be trouble, but on the whole thought it would be better to allow the Ashanti soldiers to pass. Against this advice the chief of Mankesim objected, "for," said he, "I have heard it said that once Ashanti soldiers gain admittance into a country they never leave it again. They have no respect for ancient rights and customs, otherwise, as you have learnt from the envoy's speech, Assin not Ashanti would now be the ruling chiefdom across the river. Why ! I have even heard that this king wishes to put an end to the ancient customs and not offer any more human sacrifices to the gods. He is like his brother who was deposed for the same thing. He wishes to make all men bow to his will. I vote against his being allowed to pass down this road."

"But how will you prevent him ?" asked Abura, who had more knowledge of the warlike power of Kumasi. "Prevent him ?" asked the chief of Anamabu, "are not the Fantis as good soldiers as the Ashantis ? Let us gather together and oppose him. I will show you how we shall prevent him." With that the Anamabu chief stood up in excited passion. He raised himself to his full height and looked a noble figure of strength as he stretched forth his arm and shook a long spear. He was a man of giant figure and the company clapped their hands in admiration of his defiant attitude. "Moreover," he continued, "we have friends at Anamabu and Cape Coast, the white men. If we are attacked,

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they will help us with their guns. If they will not assist we shall refuse to trade with them. These Ashantis do not know how the white men can fight."

It was evident now what the decision would be and the gathering seemed about to be breaking up when a stir was observed in an obscure corner. Presently an old man with snow-white hair and beard came slowly forward. It was seen from the way he held his hands, and the way in which some sought to guide his steps, that he was blind. "Oh!" said the chief of Abura, "has old Kweku anything to say? Let us hear what Kweku says. He is wise, let him speak."

For a few moments the old man moved his hands before him as if groping in the dark. Then, at last, amidst a deep hush he cried in a thin, quavering voice : "My children, I hear a voice speaking to me, a spirit which lives within me has spoken to me. I give you his word. Good were it for this land if we all accepted this Ashanti king's rule. He is wise, he is strong, but not too strong. He wishes to make better laws ; his ignorant counsellors will not agree ; he is not strong enough to compel them to do his will. He wishes to put an end to this shedding of the blood of slaves. His chiefs will not agree. Hence this rebellion of Assin. If we Fantis join him and make him our leader, we shall make him strong and enable him to carry out his wise plans. Tutu is the friend of his country."

Thus far he was listened to but the first spell of

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amazement which had chained the crowd's attention gradually broke into murmurs which swelled into clamorous shouts, "Traitor ! Coward ! Milksop ! Put him down !"

"What nonsense is this ?" roared the loud voice of Anamabu. But the old man held up his hand and bravely went on. "You, chief of Anamabu, speak of the white men. What know you of them ? In my youth I was servant to a white man and he took me to his home over the sea, and I saw his country. I saw their many ships, their large houses, their great trade, their multitudes of soldiers. Why do the white men come here ? Not for our land, but for trade. If we fight with Ashanti the white man's trade will be spoilt. If we are united under one head, they will respect us, and leave us our land. They will be content with our trade and look to see it increase. If we quarrel amongst ourselves, they will come with their guns not to help us but to rule over us. They are few in number now and their power is small like this tree when it first showed itself above the soil. Small and feeble it was then ; my own eyes saw it. A goat could have pushed it over, but for the sharp thorns which protected it. But the British power will increase until it covers the whole land as the wide branches of this mighty tree now overshadow this yard. So my spirit tells me. My children, let us unite in obedience to the king of Ashanti."

"Smite him on the mouth, he is but a babbler," cried Anamabu. A stalwart ruffian near him was

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only too ready to obey the command. He struck the poor blind face so that blood gushed forth. "Ah!" cried the seer, "blood, blood everywhere! I see a land flowing with blood and the streets choked with the bodies of the slain. The waters of the sea stained——" Another blow from behind felled him to the ground. But as he fell he caught hold of the chief of Anamabu's robe and dragging it down left the great man standing almost naked. "Upon thee, O Anamabu, shall the power of Ashanti strike and thy people shall be left defenceless." "He curses me," cried the superstitious chief, in manifest terror as his attendants stamped the life out of the unhappy prophet, wise before his time.

But events were soon to show how true his forecast was. The Ashanti spy in the opposite corner did not stay to hear the formal decision. He silently slipped out unobserved, having heard and seen enough to make clear to his master all he wished to know.

CHAPTER VIII

THE INVASION OF FANTI BY ASHANTI, AND THE SIEGE OF ANAMABU

THE council of Abura refused to grant the permission to cross Fanti-land, which had been requested by the king of Kumasi, and the Ashantis at once invaded the country by force. They swept aside the resistance offered to them and taking Atta, chief of Abura, prisoner, they placed him in the hands of the chief of Asikuma for safe keeping. Nkum, however, becoming jealous and alarmed at the increasing power of Ashanti, decided to take sides with the Fantis and allowed the prisoner to escape.

Finding that he had a difficult people to contend with, the king of Ashanti tried once more, by offers of presents and friendship, to persuade the Fantis to surrender certain trophies such as the state swords and golden axe which had come into their possession. These friendly offers were rejected with insults in a way that appears to us to be barbarous and unnecessarily provocative. The messengers of the king were cruelly put to death. Naturally the indignation of the king was greatly aroused by this

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unexpected treatment of his servants, and by the contemptuous refusal of his requests. He swore by the greatest oath at his command never to rest until he had secured the heads of Tsibu and Aputé and had inflicted suitable punishment upon the nation that had so presumed to defy him. He declared his intention to destroy every Fanti, man, woman and child. A hotly-contested battle was fought near Abura in which the Fantis bore themselves with such courage that for a time it seemed as if the invaders would be driven back. Kwami, however, commanded his army in person, and by a skilful manœuvre, often practised by the Ashantis, he attacked his foes in the rear and turned the tide of battle. The Fantis gave way in panic and an immense slaughter took place. Abrakrampa was burnt and the survivors fled to Anamabu which at that time was considered the most important town on the coast.

In Anamabu Fort and in the castle at Cape Coast there were small British garrisons. When these heard of the fighting and of the retreat from Abura, they endeavoured to intervene by sending a flag of truce, hoping to induce the Ashantis to make peace and retire. To this proposal the inhabitants of both towns objected and would not allow the flag of truce to proceed. They were confident that they would be able to repel the invader. No one seems to have had knowledge of the military skill and strength of the Ashantis, but they were soon to find it out through bitter experience.

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Having learnt that the Ashanti army was drawing near with the intention of attacking Anamabu, the British garrison in the fort, although they had no part in the dispute, determined to do what they could to help the inhabitants. They offered the protection of the fort to as many of the old people, women and children of the town as they could gather inside the walls. They then made the gate fast and fortified it as strongly as they could. Having done this they prepared their arms and awaited events.

A large company of Fantis marched out to meet the enemy, but were soon driven back with great loss. Seized with panic they retreated to the beach pursued by their relentless foes. Here a terrible scene took place. The Fantis were forced into the surf which became crimson with the blood of the slain, thus literally fulfilling the prophecy of the martyred seer, Kweku. Many of them escaped immediate death by swimming to a large rock in the sea a little way from the shore.

The British endeavoured to deter the enraged Ashantis from their pursuit of the terrified Fantis, by firing one or two rounds of cannon shot into them as they crowded on the beach. But this had no effect upon them and as soon as they had killed as many of the Fantis as they could lay hands on, they advanced to attack the fort. The garrison was few in number, consisting of only five Englishmen—Messrs. White, Meredith, Swanzy, Smith and Barnes, and about twenty native helpers. Possibly



CADE COAST CASTLE WITH FORT VICTORIA IN DISTANCE

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the Ashantis expected an easy victory and much plunder. In this they were disappointed. A most gallant and determined resistance was offered to them by the tiny garrison, and they were unable to scale the walls owing to the deadly fire of the brave defenders who fought all day with the utmost courage, and successfully held the besiegers at bay. The enemy renewed the attack again and again. A hail of bullets was poured into the fort killing one of the Negroes and wounding two of the Englishmen. The attackers were equal in bravery to the defenders. One man actually reached the gate and was about to set fire to it when a shot struck him and he fell dead, his body putting out the fire which he had kindled. The members of the garrison sheltered themselves by lying flat behind the low parapet, and fired their guns so often that they became almost too hot to hold. They suffered greatly from wounds and the burning sun, but stubbornly refused to yield. All through the terrible day they fought and at length their courage had its reward. When night came on the baffled Ashantis withdrew from the scene. Thus ended one of the most memorable struggles in the history of the Gold Coast.

Meanwhile the two fugitive chiefs, whose misguided acts had been the cause of the whole trouble, had fled to Cape Coast, where they were sheltered in the town by the inhabitants. Orders were sent by the commandant of the castle, a man named Torrane, to the garrison of Anamabu that a flag of truce should be sent to Kwami who was

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encamped outside the town. This was done, and the king consented to make peace on condition that Tsibu and Aputé were surrendered to him as well as half the people who had taken refuge in the fort. To his disgrace, Torrane agreed to this proposal although he had promised to protect the chiefs and of course the poor people in the fort had done no wrong to anyone. This base act was not one of which any Englishman is proud. On the contrary, it is regarded as a foul blot on the glory of the brave and spirited defence of the fort by the tiny garrison against the thousands of raging Ashantis.

Aputé managed to escape to the west, but Tsibu, who was an old man, blind and ill, was delivered up to the Ashantis, and by them done to death with inhuman tortures. Torrane also agreed to give up half the poor people who had fled to the fort for refuge. This was also a treacherous and dishonourable deed as, by allowing the refugees to enter the fort, the English had virtually promised to protect them. To the credit of the British name, an English merchant named John Swanzy, one of the heroic garrison who had resisted the attack on the fort, when he heard of the proposal to surrender those in the fort, went to Torrane at Cape Coast and made a public protest against such a cowardly betrayal. He was lying ill at the time at Accra, but he rose from his sick bed and travelled by canoe to Cape Coast to remonstrate with the commandant. This brave effort cost him his life as, soon after his return, he died owing to the exposure to the sea and

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sun which he had to endure on the journey. Doubtless also he was weakened by the strenuous efforts which he made on the memorable day of the siege.

The agreement which was thus made was only between the Ashanti king and the English commander at Cape Coast. In the first place Kwami perceived that the British were only in the country for purposes of trade and shrewdly thought that since he had now broken through the Fanti barrier he could set up commercial relations directly with the merchants on the coast. Furthermore, he regarded the territories of the Fantis as a new hunting-ground for slaves, many of which he secured at another great battle near Kormantin. The action of Torrane in allowing him to carry off Fanti refugees as slaves led him to imagine that such was the character of all the British people. He did not know that in that same year—1807—the British Parliament had passed a law abolishing the slave trade in all their dominions. Had he known this he would have understood that for him to deal with a nation like the British would not be a matter of simple trade in anything he liked to sell. When a primitive people enters into relations with a civilised nation the former must be prepared to adapt themselves to the higher, more advanced people and make changes in their customs. The Fantis had already learnt that lesson and therein lay their confidence in facing the Ashantis. The Ashantis may have been stronger in military discipline and braver in battle, but in the end they failed to crush

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the Fantis. Even after the battle of Kormantin they were compelled to retreat to Kumasi owing to their ignorance of sanitation and their inability to prevent disease from breaking out in their camp. Had they been able to foresee that, in less than a century, the very nation of merchants with whom they had for the first time come into contact in that fateful year—1807—would destroy their own kingdom and deprive them of power, they would have retired to their homes with less elation and pride of heart because they had beaten the Fantis and reached the coast.

CHAPTER IX

RESULTS OF THE INVASION OF FANTI BY ASHANTI

THE spirit of the Fantis was by no means broken by the severe defeats which they had suffered at the hands of their enemies. They followed the retreating army, harassing it by attacks of small, swiftly moving bands which appeared and disappeared at points when they were not expected. Then, when the Ashantis were safely across the Prah, the Fanti leaders sought to punish those of their own districts which had in any way failed to assist them in the late struggle.

An attack was first made upon Accra, but this was repulsed. Then turning to the west, a long siege was laid to Elmina on the ground that the inhabitants of that town had assisted the invaders. Even Cape Coast was threatened with punishment for the petty reason that it had not suffered as had Anamabu and Winneba in the late fighting. These movements were the expression of the misguided and short-sighted resentment of a disunited people, and were all unsuccessful. Their only result was to spread misery still more widely abroad, and to

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hinder the recovery of trade. As long as the Fantis were unable to raise up an acknowledged leader who could unite all their tribes in one, as did the king of Kumasi in Ashanti, they could achieve no success over their enemies. They could just blunder blindly along at the mercy of circumstances or any sudden gust of unthinking passion. The consequence was that the years between 1807 and 1810 were most unhappy.

Some of the spirit of disunion spread into the Ashanti territories. Evidently the prestige of the king had been diminished somewhat in the war, and the chiefs of Akim and Akwapim, Atta and Kwao Saforotwi, broke away in revolt. Against these the king despatched two armies under the leadership of his most capable generals, Opoku and Appia Dunkwa. For a time the Akims were able to hold their own against the Ashantis, but in the end they were overcome and scattered. Kwao Saforotwi fled to the east and Atta to the west.

In order to try and capture Atta, the Ashanti general, Appia Dunkwa, again invaded the lands of the Fantis, this time without any preliminary request for permission. He reached the sea coast at Winneba which was destroyed. He then attempted to march westwards along the coast, intending to get as far as Elmina, whose inhabitants were always friendly with Ashanti. He was met at Mumford by an army under Atta, which he defeated. Atta, however, managed to rally his forces and meeting Appia again at Tantumkweri he compelled him to

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retreat and ultimately inflicted so severe a defeat, that the Ashantis were compelled to retire from Fantiland

This Atta was a good leader of men, and might have made the Fantis into a strong nation had they been willing to unite under him. Unfortunately he fell ill of small-pox and died soon after the victory of Tantumkweri, 1811. The lack of leadership was so great that lawlessness became almost universal. This was shewn by an act of cruelty almost unparalleled. In 1812, an Englishman named Meredith, a member of the garrison which had so gallantly fought for the Fantis at Anamabu in 1807, was commandant of the fort at Winneba. Some money was reported to be missing, and certain Fanti fetish priests declared that Mr. Meredith had taken it. Without any previous notice or proper trial, he was seized and dragged into the bush and so ill-treated that he died. Such a deed of wanton cruelty could only be done by people who had become thoroughly disorganised. Lack of leadership not only hinders a nation from resisting their outward enemies, it also makes them fall into wicked crimes against themselves. For this ungrateful misdeed against one of their own number who had so greatly helped the Fantis in their time of need, the English inflicted severe punishment by blowing up the fort and destroying the town which for many years lay desolate and abandoned.

The rebellion of Akim and Akwapim against Ashanti continued for several years. At last the

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king of Kumasi was roused to make another attempt to subdue them. A still larger army than before was sent under the general Amankwa, and a smaller force under Appia Dunkwa. This led to the third invasion of Fanti.

The Akims and Akwapims were defeated with great loss of life at Egwa-arru and as before in the case of the Assins, so now, the rebel chiefs of Akim and Akwapim, Kodjo Kuma and Kwao Saforotwi fled to Fanti. The Ashantis followed them in hot pursuit. This time the Fantis were unable to resist the invaders. They gathered together in large numbers at Abura, but gave way and fled at the first onset of their antagonists. They had become demoralised since the last invasion. They were not loyal to their leaders and distrusted one another and as a consequence were not able to stand against the foe.

The fugitives fled to Cape Coast followed by the victors. Early in 1816 a regiment of Ashantis arrived at Mori on the east of Cape Coast, while another detachment was seen on the west of the town near the salt lagoon. The inhabitants were thrown into a state of excessive terror, fearing that what had happened ten years previously at Anamabu would now be repeated in their town. A vast crowd of panic-stricken people assembled near the castle crying for protection, and it is said that over four thousand were admitted into the courtyard.

For some unknown reason the Ashantis did not

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press their advantage. In reply to a message sent to them by the Governor, Mr. Hope-Smith, they said that they only sought the rebel chiefs of Akim and Akwapim. They did not wish to harm Cape Coast, but demanded three Fanti chiefs, Aggrey, Paintri and Amissa, whom they accused of fighting against them without cause. The Governor interceded on behalf of these three men and was able to pacify the Ashanti generals by the payment on their behalf of a sum of money. The Akim and Akwapim chiefs were not in Cape Coast, but had gone elsewhere, and the Ashanti army marched eastward in search of them, destroying farms and gardens as they went. Shortly afterwards, Kuma and Saforotwi were captured and beheaded and the Ashantis, having succeeded in achieving their purpose, returned to their own land.

These violent conflicts between the Ashantis and the coast peoples bore fruit of several kinds. The immediate effect was seen in what has already been alluded to, the devastation of the land on the south-east side of the Prah, the destruction of commerce and the demoralisation of the inhabitants. In former years Mansu was a great market and centre of trade. This was utterly broken up and never regained its position. Another result was the effect produced upon the British merchants who perceived that, in order to maintain their trade, it would be necessary to enter into direct relations with the inland nation which now claimed the over-lordship of the whole of the peoples on the

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waterside from beyond Accra on the east to beyond Sekondi on the west. Finally, the assistance which the British had rendered to the Fantis in their distress, especially those of Anamabu and Cape Coast, gave the merchants a right to exercise a wider authority over the people near them. Previous to this, the political power of the British had been limited to those who actually dwelt within the walls of their several forts. From this time they began to exert an influence in the internal affairs of those who dwelt beyond the walls, that is in the towns within the range of their guns, since the guns could be used for their protection.

This change in the attitude and position of the merchants, naturally interfered with the authority of the local chiefs and diminished their power. The chiefs became jealous and made objection, and at times there were serious disturbances. Gradually, however, they were obliged to acquiesce as they realised that they were not able to protect their people without the help of the Europeans. The common people were not slow to recognise the benefits of the strict justice and protection which the presence of the British afforded them, and, as always happens to weak and selfish rulers, those who ought to have led had to follow their subjects. The chiefs not only agreed that the Governor of Cape Coast, for example, should have the power to punish crimes such as theft or selling false gold, but gradually gave up the ancient practice of human sacrifices at their festivals in response to the

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opposition to these acts which the British brought to bear on them.

Some began to show signs of a desire to conform to European civilisation altogether by attending and allowing their children to attend a school which was opened in Cape Coast. This was done in 1815 and by 1817 no less than forty boys were enrolled as pupils. About this time, also, an English clergyman came to Cape Coast at the expense of the merchants known as the African Company.

In 1817, Kumasi was visited for the first time by Europeans. The result of the invasion of Fanti by the king of Ashanti had revealed the necessity of having a proper understanding with that ruler, and an embassy consisting of four Englishmen, James, Bowdich, Hutchinson and Tedlie, made the journey from Anamabu to the famous inland city. The leadership of the expedition later on passed from Mr. James to Bowdich, who wrote an interesting account of what he saw. The party was greatly impressed by the traces of ruin and desolation which they witnessed all along the road, the work of the Ashanti armies. They were astonished by the display of military power made in their presence when they reached the city, as well as by the evidences of wealth.

This visit resulted in the acknowledgment by the British of the right of the Ashanti king to receive rent for the castles of Anamabu and Cape Coast. The king of Kumasi, by virtue of this acknowledgement, was practically overlord of the four ports of

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Elmina, Cape Coast, Anamabu and Accra. A treaty was also drawn up by which each party agreed to respect the rights of the other, to prevent further hostilities and to protect one another's subjects. There were three items in this treaty of especial interest and importance. One was to the effect that while the Governor of Cape Coast Castle had the right to punish any Ashanti person who committed a minor offence while under his jurisdiction, he was to send to Kumasi any person who, being a subject of Ashanti, committed a serious crime. There he was to be tried according to the laws of his own nation. A second was to the effect that if any tribe or nation under the rule of the Governor were to offend the King, then the King was to complain to the Governor and obtain redress through him. Finally, the King of Ashanti and the chief of Dwabin agreed to send their children to the school at Cape Coast in care of the Governor. When the embassy returned to the coast, Mr. Hutchinson remained in Kumasi as a Resident to represent the British Government.

CHAPTER X

ASHANTI ENDEAVOURS TO OBTAIN COMPLETE CONTROL OF FANTI

AFTER the settlement described in the last chapter, trade began to revive and prosperity returned to the country. The people were soon able to see that the increase in the proper and legitimate articles of commerce, more than repaid them for the loss of profits made by the slave trade. This trade, however, was still carried on by persons who refused to obey the law passed by the British Parliament in 1807, by which the enslavement of human beings was forbidden. The Dutch traders who lived at Elmina were notable offenders. Other daring private adventurers also gave much trouble by secretly procuring slaves, and many years elapsed before the British succeeded in suppressing the vile traffic completely.

Other anxieties also arose which made the position of the British on the coast more and more difficult. They had hoped that, by entering into friendly relations with Ashanti, peace would be assured now that commerce was open to everyone. They had only come for trade, and as war hindered trade, they hoped that the Ashantis would under-

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stand that it was to their interest to preserve peace. But nations, especially primitive nations, do not live by trade alone. This the British were to find out by their dealings with the proud people of Ashanti.

It was not long before the question of the political relations between the Fantis and Ashantis gave rise to friction. The former were very jealous of the claim of the latter to be their overlord, and resented any thought that Bowdich's treaty made them subjects of the inland king. This was shown by an act of theirs the year after the treaty was signed. The king of Ashanti went to war with a tribe further to the north, and reports reached the coast that he had been defeated and slain. On receipt of this news the inhabitants of Cape Coast could not refrain from manifesting their joy publicly. They gave vent to their passionate dislike of Ashanti by maltreating certain Ashanti men who were residing in the town. Unfortunately for them the reports which they had heard turned out to be unfounded and false.

The truth was that the King had been signally victorious and his power was greater than ever. He heard of the doings in Cape Coast and of the injuries inflicted upon his subjects. Consequently he determined to assert his power in the south as well as in the north. The method by which he sought to do this was very unusual but, if rightly considered, it shows that Tutu Kwami was an astute man according to the knowledge he possessed.

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He did not declare open war on the Fantis because he knew that, if he did so, the British would interfere. He opened negotiations, but in a very strange and indirect way. Had he sent direct to the Governor and complained of the treatment of his people in Cape Coast, he would have received proper satisfaction as the sequel shows. But it was not mere compensation which he desired : he was cunningly reaching out after a more ambitious aim.

The people of Kommenda, to the west of Elmina, were very proud and quick to resent any one who claimed authority over them. One day messengers appeared in Kommenda from Kumasi who announced the victories of the king over his northern foes and demanded tribute money to celebrate his triumph. This tribute the Kommendas refused to pay. They not only refused the demands of the messengers but drove them away with insults. The envoys immediately proceeded to Cape Coast and laid a complaint before the Governor, demanding satisfaction according to the Bowdich treaty. To this complaint the Governor—Mr. Hope-Smith—declined to listen. He was not prepared to acknowledge the sovereignty of Ashanti over the sea-coast to the unlimited extent which the action of the king seemed to claim. Why had the king of Ashanti chosen the town of Kommenda in order to announce his victory? Such strange procedure seemed arbitrary and unwarranted. Yet the action of the Ashanti King may not have been so wanton as it appeared. There may have

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been a valid reason for it, and what it was is one of the problems of the history of the country. Was Kommenda an ancient centre of a section of the Akan peoples which had fallen into obscurity but whose existence old tradition still recognised? Did the embassy of Tutu Kwami mean that the former existence of this section was still remembered?

Up to this time the so-called Governor of Cape Coast Castle had been an officer appointed by a company of merchants and did not directly represent the Government of England. But in 1819 an officer named Dupuis arrived in Cape Coast who was sent out by the British Government to act independently of the merchants as consul at Kumasi. He proceeded to Kumasi and made a fresh treaty with the king according to which full sovereignty over the whole of the coast peoples was to be granted to Ashanti. This apparently gave to Tutu Kwami all that he desired, but when Dupuis returned to Cape Coast neither the merchant-governor nor the Fantis would acknowledge his treaty.

The Ashanti king then sought to send a representative to England to treat with the British Government direct, thinking that in that way he would obtain from the rulers in England what the merchant authorities in Cape Coast would not grant. In this Tutu Kwami showed his astute understanding of the difference between a mere body of British merchants and the supreme Government in England. At the same time he also



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betrayed his ignorance of the way in which Britishers stand by each other in spite of their differences. His purposes were wrecked on the same rock on which the last Ashanti monarch and his advisers came to grief. Tutu Kwami had no ships and the captain of the British man-of-war which was lying near Cape Coast would not permit the Ashanti envoy to go on board his vessel. Thus he was foiled in his endeavour to make himself the acknowledged master of the whole coast. All he could do was to hope that Dupuis, who returned to England, would be able to persuade the Government to accept his treaty and so grant his demands. In this, however, he was doomed to disappointment.

In 1820, rumours were heard that another attack was to be made on Cape Coast, and under the direction of the Governor, the defences of the town were strengthened. A small fort and watch-tower were built overlooking the Ashanti road and named Smith's Tower. This is the tower afterwards known as Fort William and now used as a lighthouse. The expected invasion however never came, as the governor persuaded and assisted the inhabitants to pay a sum of money to settle what was indeed a proper and legitimate demand for compensation for the maltreatment of the Ashanti residents in Cape Coast. But nothing ever came of the curious demand for tribute from Kommenda.

The Ashantis still endeavoured to keep the quarrel open by making small disturbances and creating friction. A Fanti man named Paintri had

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been made chief of Abura by the Ashantis as one method of asserting their supremacy. This Paintri forsook his Fanti allegiance and took the side of his Ashanti masters at whose instigation he attacked a small village near to Cape Coast. A native of this village was murdered in Mori and in the resulting disturbance Paintri was slain. Professing to be grieved at these occurrences and also disappointed because, after waiting a year, he had heard nothing from Dupuis, as to the acceptance of his treaty, the king closed the roads and stopped all trading of his country with Cape Coast. In view of this, the town was still further fortified against possible attacks by building a mud wall in a semi-circle from the beach beyond the castle on the east over the hills behind the town to the beach near the lagoon. A second tower was also built on the west overlooking the road to Elmina. This was at first called Phipp's Tower, but afterwards was re-named Fort Victoria. No attack was made, the Ashantis contenting themselves by diverting the trade to Elmina and Accra. They soon found that by this procedure they were punishing themselves as well as the Fantis, and the next year the King professed to be satisfied with the manner in which the disturbance at Mori had been settled and trade was once more resumed.

Although Dupuis, on his return to England, failed to obtain acceptance and ratification of his treaty whereby the Ashanti supremacy would have been recognised, yet his report had the effect of

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causing the British Government to institute a great change in the method of conducting their affairs on the coast. Many people thought that it was not right that a private association of merchants should exercise political power. It was feared that people whose primary object was to make profit by trade would sometimes be tempted, for the sake of gain, to commit injustice. Government should always be strictly impartial. For that reason an Act of Parliament was passed, setting aside the company of merchants who ruled at Cape Coast, and placing the power in the hands of an independent officer appointed by the Crown. The merchants were not altogether pleased at the way in which this change was made, although no doubt they were glad to be rid of the responsibility of government. They had honestly tried to do their duty, and, with the exception of Torrane, who had died fourteen years previously, no one had ever been able to charge them with any default.

The company therefore handed over to the Government all their forts and stations. It is interesting to recall what these were at that date—1822. They were Cape Coast, Anamabu, James Fort (Accra), Tantumkweri, one in Apollonia, Dixcove and Kommenda. A new fort had just been built at Winneba, and there were small stations at Prampram and Sekondi, but no forts, the merchants at these latter places living in hired houses in the towns.

The political officer appointed by the Crown was

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Sir Charles M'Carthy, Governor of Sierra Leone, and for a time the Gold Coast was regarded as a dependency of that colony. The new Governor paid a brief visit to Cape Coast in 1822 and arranged for its defence against the inland enemy by raising a military force in two divisions, the Royal Cape Coast Militia, and the Royal Cape Coast Volunteers. He appears, however, to have failed to obtain a proper knowledge of the position of affairs in the country. Probably the merchants, feeling aggrieved at being deprived of their leadership, and at the high-handed way in which Dupuis had behaved towards Hope-Smith, were slow to give Sir Charles the benefit of their experience. Perhaps he did not trouble to ask them for it. Whatever the reason, the sequel shows that he acquired little or no knowledge of the strength and character of the Ashantis. After having created the small militia force mentioned, he returned to Sierra Leone, leaving in charge two junior officers, Captain Chisholm and Lieutenant Laing.

CHAPTER XI

THE BRITISH ADVANCE INTO THE INTERIOR

THE year 1823 is noteworthy as marking a great alteration in the methods of the British. For centuries they had been content to remain on the immediate sea-shore, but now that the direction of their affairs was taken in hand by their home Government, they began to assume more responsibility and to advance into the interior. Governor Hope-Smith had built a wall not half a mile from the water. That showed that it was not in his mind to leave Cape Coast. The first act of the new Governor, Sir Charles M'Carthy, was to raise a regiment of soldiers. Walls stand still ; armies move. The two different acts of defence were significant of a changed attitude. The chief causes of this departure from the old method were, first, that the interest of the British in the country was no longer merely commercial but political as well, and second, that the power of Ashanti was extending and gradually approaching nearer and nearer to the sea. Some of the Fanti chiefs, indeed, notably Asikuma and Mankesim, had already submitted to Kumasi and the stool of Abura was

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occupied by a nominee of Ashanti. Only Anamabu and Cape Coast appeared to be left independent and the people of these towns lived in constant dread of invasion.

From this date, however, the tide began to turn although there were many set-backs and checks. The fundamental cause of this was the character of Ashanti rule which was essentially cruel and oppressive, and brought no blessing to the people who fell under its sway. The people of Accra had learnt this through the repeated demands which came from Kumasi for tribute in the shape of powder and other materials for war. The farm lands in the vicinity of their town had also been wantonly destroyed.

Early in the year, Sir Charles M'Carthy returned to Cape Coast from Sierra Leone, and at once began to develop and apply his plans for the defence of the people under his protection. The first of the movements into the interior of armed soldiers under the leadership of the British, was to Dunkwa. The Ashantis had captured a sergeant of the Royal African Colonial Corps stationed at Anamabu and carried him off to Dunkwa, where he was put to death by their public executioner, and it was to avenge this murder that an expedition of three hundred men was sent from Cape Coast. The expedition was unfortunately wrongly directed and falling into an ambush was compelled to retire. Nevertheless, the fact that such a step had been taken, marking, as it did, such a distinct change

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from the past policy, produced a profound impression on the minds of the people, giving them a sense of confidence that henceforth they could rely upon the British taking active steps to defend them and punish those who did them wrong.

One immediate effect of the new policy as shewn by this expedition, was the ease with which the Accras were detached from their alliance with the inland monarch, and induced to throw in their lot with the Fantis. Hearing that the Accras were discontented with the rule of Ashanti, the Governor paid a visit to that town and persuaded the inhabitants to throw off their allegiance to Tutu Kwami. From that date the Ashantis never recovered the advantage which had been theirs through alliance with the Accras. Sir Charles caused the more intelligent of his new friends to form a militia similar to that which had been raised in Cape Coast. This body, under their own leaders, repelled the next company of Ashantis who came seeking tribute. They were also, later on, a source of substantial help to Cape Coast.

The Ashantis soon showed that they understood the significance of the changed policy and of the danger which it implied to their power. They lost no time in sending a large army across the Prah to assert their threatened position. At once the British despatched the whole of their military force, under Captain Chisholm, to oppose the advance of the enemy. This caused several of the Fanti chiefs in the interior, who had submitted to Kumasi,

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to renounce their allegiance and return to their natural allies. Asikuma did not do so and their chief town was attacked and destroyed. The Ashantis hastened to the assistance of their subjects but were met and defeated. The Fantis on this occasion lost an opportunity of driving their disheartened enemies completely out of their country, for, instead of following up their victory by a vigorous pursuit, they spent so much time in plundering the deserted camp that the Ashantis escaped.

Later in the year Sir Charles M'Carthy again came to Cape Coast and at once took steps to expel the invaders who had been reinforced by a second larger army. Once again the old proverb was justified—"Kum apim a apim beba." He marched by way of Jukwa to Ampensasu on the Prah. From there he moved in the direction of Wassaw by way of Bensu, Himan and Deroboasi, where he crossed the river and went forward several miles beyond the town of Nsamanko. Unfortunately Sir Charles was ignorant of the nature of the country and thought the army of the Ashantis was less than it proved to be, neither did he know their highly developed skill in bush warfare. A series of unhappy blunders was made and although the soldiers with him, especially the Denkeras, fought bravely, they were utterly overwhelmed and the Governor, with several English officers, was slain. The result of this battle of Nsamanko as it is usually called, though it was actually fought near the river

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Adamansu, caused great consternation on the coast. The surviving British and their native allies retreated to Cape Coast and the Ashantis pursuing them reached Elmina. From there they sent a message that they did not wish to fight with the English, thereby showing their cunning understanding of the situation. They knew that if the English were driven away all trade would be destroyed. What they desired was to remain friends with the Europeans, but to confine them to the coast while they exercised lordship over the whole of the interior. How to solve that problem, however, was too difficult for their statecraft. They professed to be willing to retire provided certain chiefs were surrendered to them, the principal of whom was another Tsibu, the chief of Denkera, who had loyally stood by Sir Charles M'Carthy in his distress. The British officer now in charge was of a very different character from Torrane who had basely yielded up Tsibu of Assin in 1807. He refused to listen to such a proposal for a moment. Thereupon the Ashantis advanced to the very outskirts of Cape Coast.

Terror now seized the inhabitants of the town as they saw the forces of their dreaded foes on the hills surrounding them. Thousands crowded into the castle yard for protection and famine and pestilence broke out. The distress was very great. The officer in command, expecting that the castle would be stormed as had been done at Anamabu, ordered some houses near the walls to be pulled

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down and burnt so as to make a clear space between the castle and the town. If the enemy should attempt to cross this space he would be exposed to the fire of the guns. The flames of the burning houses spread to other houses and there was a general conflagration. This, of course, greatly added to the misery of the wretched townspeople.

The Ashantis, however, did not press their attack upon the town. After encamping upon the hills outside for several weeks, they suddenly departed for their own country. Disease had broken out in their midst and they were losing more men by sickness than by fighting. They interpreted the sight of the burning town to mean that the inhabitants were desperate and determined never to yield. Possibly also they had heard that an army of Accras was advancing through Akim to attack their country and take them in the rear. As they retreated, they followed their usual custom of devastating the country by destroying villages and farms, so that for many years much distress prevailed throughout the entire region. Food had to be sent from Sierra Leone and England to feed the starving people in and around Cape Coast and Anamabu. ☀

By a remarkable coincidence the great king Tutu Kwami died in Kumasi on the same day as the fatal battle of Nsamanko at which Sir Charles M'Carthy lost his life. But the policy of the Ashantis did not change. In 1826 another army appeared south of the Prah. It was sent ostensibly to punish Asikuma whose chief had finally thrown

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in his lot with the Fanti alliance, but the Ashantis took the occasion to overrun and devastate all the eastern Fanti districts. Finally, led by the new king, Yao, in person, the whole of the invading host advanced to Accra intending to take revenge upon the inhabitants for having united with the Fantis. All the allies gathered together to the aid of the Accras, assisted by the various bodies of militia which had been organised by the Europeans in Cape Coast, Anamabu, Accra and Christiansborg. In the month of August the Ashantis were reported to be at Dodowa. The coast tribes did not wait to be attacked, but in accordance with the new policy, boldly marched across the plain to attack the enemy, whom they found at the foot of the Aburi hills near Bawalishi. Their spirit was shown by the rivalry which arose amongst them as to who should occupy the post of greatest danger and honour in the line of battle. A fiercely contested struggle ensued and continued all day. At one time it seemed as if the Fanti line would be broken. Some indeed began to give way before the fierce onset of the Ashanti troops. These fought with desperate zeal as if they knew how much depended on the issue. Their courage was fired by the knowledge that their king was with them. Some of the chiefs performed prodigies of valour, and something of the secret of their ardour and devotion was revealed by the fact that even in the confusion of battle, as soon as the death of any of his captains was reported, the king immediately ordered the preliminary funeral rites to

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be performed in honour of the fallen chief. Mistaken heathen custom as we may now consider it to be, yet it was a part of their religion and constituted the bond which held them so firmly together. Soldiers who know that in death they will not be forgotten by their king, are never unwilling to risk their lives in his service.

But this time it was all in vain. The wavering Fantis were rallied and encouraged by the British, and fired by the example of the brave Denkeras, they hurled themselves upon the Ashantis. They showed that when well led they were equal to their foes in courage. The carnage was terrible. The Ashanti chiefs one after another were beaten back. Many, when they realised that they had lost the day, blew themselves up in despair, adding to the universal confusion by the noise and thunder of the explosions. As darkness fell they fled into the hills in utter rout, leaving, it is said, no less than five thousand dead upon the field. A dense grove of trees now marks the centre of the struggle, having been left uncut all these years as a sign of the horror of the survivors at the dread events of that memorable day. The king managed to escape, but only very narrowly, as a Denkera chief actually broke through the ranks of his bodyguard and was about to strike him when he himself was struck down by a spear. A large number of the noblest warriors of the Ashantis army perished, and many prisoners were taken amongst whom were found some members of the royal family. It was a long

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time before the Ashanti power recovered from this blow. Dodowa was the counterpoise to Nsamanko, and after that the nations of the coast began to take heart and feel more confident. The new policy was justified.

CHAPTER XII

THE INFLUENCE OF AN ENGLISHMAN. GEORGE MACLEAN

CONTRARY to expectation, the result of the battle of Dodowa did not bring about happy relations between the Fantis and their protectors, the British. Differences arose between them on account of the attitude which the latter wished to adopt towards the defeated Ashantis. The chief concern of the British Government was that the country should be at peace. To this end they did not wish to remain in enmity with the Ashantis, but were anxious to restore friendly relations with them as soon as possible. To this the Fantis objected because, as they said, if the victors offered to make peace, the Ashantis would regard it as a sign of weakness, and seek to continue the struggle. They maintained that it was not for the victors to offer peace but to wait until the defeated begged for it. Probably the Fantis were right ; but naturally this argument did not appeal to the British who were conscious of their own greater power, and knew that they could soon undeceive the Ashantis if they persisted in fighting. The British were also irritated by the slow, dilatory methods of the Fantis

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who, like many Africans, had not the same sense of the value of time as had the British. Yet they were compelled to wait, and at length, after a long delay, the Ashantis did as the Fantis had foretold. They acknowledged their defeat and sued for peace.

Now that the Ashanti power had been broken, the Fantis thought the time favourable for them to punish the people of Elmina for having assisted their enemies in the campaign of 1824. Siege was laid to the town and for a long period the Elminas were subjected to great privations. This was another cause of difference between the British and Fantis, as the latter refused all requests of the British to make peace with their old antagonists. At last the British grew very weary of the continual disturbances and unrest which were a serious hindrance to commerce, and, seeing that the country was becoming of little profit to them, they determined to withdraw. A warship was sent out to take away all the British merchants and their property, and the officers in charge had orders to blow up the forts. The prospect of this alarmed the Fantis who now began to fear that they would be left to the cruel tyranny of Kumasi. The merchants, also, were not agreeable to the proposed abandonment, and took steps to make known their wishes to the British Government in London. After much correspondence it was decided to leave the forts standing and to go back to the old arrangement. The oversight of affairs was entrusted to a council of leading European merchants which was to be

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represented on the coast by an officer with the title of President.

This committee appointed as their officer a very remarkable man who acted as President or Governor from 1830 to 1844. This was the famous George Maclean, previously a captain in the Royal African Colonial Corps, who by his courage, tact and knowledge of Africans, was able to do much for the country and earned a great reputation as a wise administrator. Had Maclean been in charge of Cape Coast when Tutu Kwami was king of Kumasi, there is no doubt that events would have turned out very differently. The people of the coast would not have seen the English name disgraced and their trust shaken by the shameful act of Torrane in giving up his refugees, nor would the blunders of the brave Sir Charles McCarthy have been made and a feeble force sent into the interior in ignorance of the real strength and fighting qualities of the Ashantis. Maclean's success as an administrator was due to three things, his knowledge of the African nature, his moral courage, and, above all, his upright character.

On entering into office and taking up his duties he found the country in a very unhappy state. The Fantis were still quarrelling with the people of Elmina, and had just been repulsed with great slaughter from an attack on that town. The Ashantis had withdrawn into their own territory beyond the Prah, deeply wounded in their pride by their defeat at Dodowa, and because of their failure to conquer the coast lands, and by the destruction

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of their hopes of making themselves supreme over the whole country. They had not only failed to overcome the Fantis but had also lost their power over the Akims and the Accras. Although their ultimate object was commerce, they were too proud to deal with these as equals, and began to make a new trade route to the coast as far west as Apollonia and Assini in spite of the fact that this was very tedious and inconvenient to themselves.

Within the space of twelve months Maclean succeeded by strenuous efforts in persuading the parties at variance to meet and agree to a settlement of their disputes. A treaty was drawn up and signed in 1831 by which the king of Ashanti renounced his claim to overlordship of the coast and agreed to give security for his future good behaviour. He deposited a large sum of money which was to remain in the castle at Cape Coast for six years, and also sent two princes, one of whom was the son of Tutu Kwami, to be educated in England. Direct trade routes were to be opened between the interior and the coast, and no trader travelling thereon was to be hindered in any way.

This treaty greatly strengthened the position and influence of the British. The people never forgot that a British Governor had been the leader in making such a treaty. When, six years later, the whole of the money deposited by the Ashanti king in Cape Coast was returned to him intact, the effect was to inspire great confidence in British justice in the breasts of the Ashantis. The events of 1824

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and 1826 had also shown that the British were prepared to lead armed forces into the interior in defence of their interests. The result was that the relations of England towards this part of West Africa, began to assume a different and more stable and permanent character.

Stronger influence was also brought to bear upon the internal affairs and customs of the people. This influence being directed by a man like Maclean, whom everyone respected, became very effective and made itself apparent in several ways. The king of Denkera, who had so bravely assisted the Fantis and the British at Nsamanko and Dodowa, was given a new tract of country for his people. This land lay around Jukwa to the north of Elmina. By such a transaction Maclean hoped to be able to separate the Elminas from Kumasi by an ally upon whose loyalty he could rely. Although he was not altogether successful in this, as after-events were to show, yet he certainly made intercourse difficult between the two peoples who were unfriendly to the Fantis, and the plan remains as a proof of his careful forethought and wisdom. One article of the 1831 treaty provided for the complete suppression of the slave trade. Maclean also did all he could to abolish human sacrifices. From this date that horrible custom began to die away among the peoples who dwelt near the sea, although it was still persisted in secretly for some time. On one occasion the impartial and courageous governor did not hesitate to call to account and punish his friend Kodjo

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Tsibu, the king of Denkera, as well as a Fanti chief, who were found guilty of the practice.

Maclean's power extended far and wide, even to Apollonia in the extreme west. A chief of that country, thinking himself a long way from Cape Coast, began to interfere with traders and to make war upon his neighbours. A message was sent to him by Maclean, pointing out his wrong-doing and requiring him to desist. This message was disregarded and the messengers insulted. Maclean at once armed a small force of less than two hundred men and set out for Apollonia, taking with him an Englishman named Swanzy and a Dutchman named Bartels. He was met with resistance and repulsed at the first attack, but, being assisted by some sailors from a British man-of-war, which happened to arrive just then, he renewed the attack and overcame the Apollonians who fled into the bush. How brave the Governor was may be understood from the story of the way in which he compelled the rebel chief to submit and sign a treaty. Taking with him only one native soldier he went to the chief's camp, some miles distant, and there, not only made him acknowledge his crime, but also prevailed upon him to pay all the expenses of the expedition, as well as a large amount of gold to be deposited in the castle as security for his future good conduct. Had the chief given the slightest sign to his followers standing around, Maclean and his companion would have been instantly killed. Only the respect which was felt for the Governor's strong and upright character preserved him from death

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His influence even reached into the interior of Ashanti itself. Shortly after the visit to Apollonia, a civil war broke out between Kumasi and her most important ally, Dwabin. In some way not now clearly understood, the assistance of Maclean was invited to settle the dispute and he, together with M. Morek, the Danish governor of Accra, were able to intervene between the estranged parties and make peace.

After Maclean had been governor for about thirteen years, a number of events occurred which led many people in England to take a deeper interest in West Africa than they had ever done in previous years. It was during his term of office that Christian missionaries began to be sent out in any considerable numbers. There had been single chaplains before, but they had attended mainly to the soldiers and the European officials. The first who could be called missionaries in the modern sense were sent by the Basel Missionary Society in 1828. They chose, as the sphere of their labour, the eastern districts of the country which to-day exhibit in many ways the result of their noble and successful work. It would be difficult to name any aspect of the life of the Akan peoples which these Christian teachers have not profoundly influenced for good. The first band of missionaries all died within a few years. In 1832, three more arrived, led by Mr. Riis, who managed to survive the unhealthy climate and laid the foundations, with headquarters at Akropong, of the extensive work now carried on, since 1918, by the Scottish Mission. In 1835, a

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missionary named James Dunwell was sent by the Wesleyan Missionary Society in order to work primarily among the Fantis. Unhappily Mr. Dunwell only lived a few months after his arrival, which was also the experience of his successors, Mr. and Mrs. Wrigley. In 1838, however, there landed in Elmina a man who was destined to spend a long life in the country and who made a great name for himself as a pioneer of Christian religion and education. This was Thomas Burch Freeman, who not only established a church in Cape Coast, but travelled far and wide in Ashanti, Nigeria and Dahomey. Governor Maclean did all he could to support and encourage the missionaries in their work. He gave a letter to Freeman recommending him to the king of Ashanti. It was some years, however, before a church was founded at Kumasi although Freeman visited that town in 1839.

About this time, also, the first carriage road was made in the country. It began at Anamabu and was laid for ten miles. Previous to that all the roads were simply narrow tracks. The towns also began to be improved by making the streets wider and straighter. Especially was this done in Cape Coast which up to this time was merely a maze of crowded houses arranged according to no plan, forming an intricate network of narrow, crooked streets. Thus it may be said that under Maclean's administration the foundations of the true prosperity of the country were laid by the introduction of the Christian religion, education, sanitation and roads.

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Some idea of the progress made may also be gathered from the fact that when he laid down his office the trade of the country was three times greater than when he became Governor.

The increased interest which the people of England began to take in the people of this land led many to think once more that it was not fitting for the Governor to be an official appointed by a committee of merchants. Consequently in 1844 the British Government again assumed direct control and a naval officer, Commander Hill, was appointed as the representative of Queen Victoria, independent of all commerce. Because of his wide knowledge and experience of native law and custom, Maclean was made judicial assessor under the new political Governor. His office was to administer justice among the natives. It was work which he loved and for which he was well fitted by his intimate acquaintance with the African character. Many people, at the time, thought that, by being appointed to a position subordinate to the new Governor, Maclean was not treated according to his deserts and that he himself ought to have been made political Governor. Yet, like all truly great men, Maclean was humble and carried on the work given him to do, as the friend of the African, without murmur or complaint until his death in 1847. His grave and that of his wife, L.E.L., a lady who had a certain reputation as a poetess, can be seen in the courtyard of Cape Coast Castle.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SECOND PERIOD OF DIRECT BRITISH RULE—1844-1864

IT was natural that when the British assumed the direct government of the lands near the forts on the coast, they should seek to make their position clear. Circumstances often arise, especially in an unsettled country, when a government has to give orders. A strong government must always insist upon obedience to its orders and a wise government always makes certain beforehand to whom it can properly issue commands and to what extent it can look for obedience.

Accordingly the first thing which the new Governor Hill did, when, in 1844, he entered into office, was to arrange a treaty with the tribes which acknowledged his rule. This treaty is known as the Bond of 1844, and occupies a most important position in the history of the Fanti peoples. In some respects it may be regarded as their Magna Charta. It was signed by the kings of Denkera, Assin, Abura, Anamabu, and by the chief of Cape Coast, and others. These native rulers by their signature acknowledged the power and jurisdiction

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of the crown of England over their people. They also declared that human sacrifices and slavery were wrong and contrary to law. All crimes such as robbery and murder were to be inquired into by the judicial officers appointed by the British Government, and the customary laws of the land were to be modified and brought into harmony with the general principles of British law.

The position and authority accorded by the Bond of 1844 to the British, soon brought about several important results. The king of Ashanti picked a quarrel with the Assins and desired to invade their territory but, being forbidden to do so by the British Governor, he bowed to his authority which was based upon the Bond, and refrained. The chief of Apollonia began again to give trouble and to molest traders. An armed expedition was sent against him by which he was captured and brought to Cape Coast for trial. Sentence of death was passed upon him, but this was commuted for one of imprisonment for life in the castle, where he died, four years later, in 1852.

The Christian religion now began to win wide acceptance amongst the West Africans and spread rapidly. By 1850 there were churches and schools in the most important towns and villages all along the coast. But the old heathen religion did not pass away without a struggle, in fact, it has not died out yet. In 1849, an incident occurred which in the end struck a great blow at heathenism, but which at the same time reveals how the Fantis had

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came to acknowledge the rule of the British even in their internal affairs. Near Mankesim, the sacred capital of the old Fanti customs, was a grove and shrine dedicated to their god Brafo to which in times of national perplexity they were accustomed to apply for direction. The priests, who were attached to the shrine, professed to give counsel and advice. Some Christian converts, in an excess of zeal, profaned the ancient grove by cutting down some of the trees and killing a deer which sought shelter there. This caused a tremendous disturbance. In revenge, the chief of Mankesim, when appealed to by the priests, destroyed the houses of the Christians who had thus offended and carried ten of them away as prisoners. On hearing of this the British magistrate held a court of inquiry at Anamabu and fined both parties. The chief of Mankesim at first refused to pay, and there was great excitement both at Anamabu and Cape Coast. But in the end, finding the Governor firm in supporting the decision of the magistrate, the chief gave way and submitted. In the general enquiry the priests confessed that their practices were really false and a system of deception.

Hitherto the expenses of government had been borne by the merchants out of the profits of their trade or by a grant from the parliament of Great Britain. Now the Governor had no connection with the merchants, yet the sphere of British influence and responsibility was becoming larger and consequently was increasing in cost. It was therefore

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thought proper that the inhabitants who had put themselves under the protection of the British should bear some part, at least, of the financial burden. The simplest way to do this would have been to impose customs duties on goods imported into the country. But there were ports on the coast owned by other Europeans. Such were that part of Accra which belonged to the Dutch, Christiansborg and other places to the east which were under the Danes, as well as Elmina and other towns to the west in the possession of the Dutch. If a duty were imposed on goods entering at Cape Coast, the traders would simply land their merchandise at another port where no duty was levied. In order to raise money by customs duties it was necessary that all the ports should be under one control, which at that time was not the case. In 1851, the Danes sold their forts to the British for £10,000. This left the coast in the hands of two European powers only. The British proposed to the Dutch that they should both adopt the same scheme of customs. To this the Dutch would not agree and therefore the proposal to establish a system of import duties could not be adopted.

Another plan was proposed called a poll-tax, by which a certain small sum was to be paid by each person living in the area under British jurisdiction. To this plan, the people represented by their chiefs consented. A meeting of all the native rulers who recognised British authority was held at Cape Coast and assumed power to make laws within their

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area. They agreed that it was right and reasonable that since England had undertaken to protect them against their enemies, they should supply part, at least, of the necessary money. By this agreement, known as the Ordinance of 1852, the relations of the three parties, the British Government, the protected tribes, and Ashanti, were made plain. Henceforth it was understood that, in the event of an invasion by the Ashantis, the British Government would take up the defence.

Not only did the inhabitants undertake to bear in this way a good part of the expense of government but they also undertook part of the active duties as well. In place of soldiers from the West Indies, a local regiment was raised consisting of Africans who were to be trained as gunners. This body of men was known as the Gold Coast Corps. It is a matter of regret that this plan whereby the Government was to be assisted in money and men did not prove successful, as we shall see later on.

Not all the chiefs who had signed the Bond of 1844 were perfectly loyal to their agreement. The ruler of Assin was one who wavered between allegiance to England and submission to Ashanti. Doubtless he found that the close kinship between his people and the Ashantis was a stronger force to draw them together than the jealousy which was the cause of their separation. He accepted a bribe from the King of Kumasi and attempted to persuade his people to submit to Ashanti rule. For this he was arrested and imprisoned in the Castle of Cape

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Coast. The reigning King of Kumasi, Kweku Dua I., was a man of peaceable disposition, otherwise war might have broken out. The subordinate chiefs of Assin drew up a petition on behalf of their king, and sent it to the Governor, requesting that he should be pardoned. This was granted, and he was set at liberty on condition that all the Assins came to live south of the Prah so that they might be separated from the influence of Ashanti.

Those parts of the coast which lay to the east of Accra and which had been under the government of the Danes did not take kindly to the firm rule of the British. Under the Danes they had been allowed to do pretty much as they liked, especially with regard to traffic in slaves. When compelled by their new rulers to desist from this wicked trade they made an attempt to rebel and assert their independence. In this they were unsuccessful, although they carried their resistance to such a length as to lay siege to Christiansborg Castle in 1854. A British man-of-war bombarded and destroyed some of their villages after which they made their surrender. Yet for several years this part of the coast was very unsettled and always ready on any excuse to break out in rebellion.

On the whole, for a considerable time, after the settlements of 1851 and 1852, the country was at peace and great prosperity ensued. Trade increased and friendly relations were established with the Ashantis, many of whom actually came to reside in the coast towns. Men began to hope that, in time,

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the whole of the interior would yield to the influence of civilisation and that, in particular, slavery and human sacrifice would entirely cease.

The Ashantis, however, remained independent and indeed were jealous and watchful of any movement which threatened their position and power. They were not content to be merely wealthy and still considered themselves superior to the people to the south of them whom, perhaps, they despised as depending for their protection upon the support of another nation from abroad. But as there had been no active warfare for nearly forty years it was hoped that the bitterness of the ancient enmity had died away.

These hopes were destined to be disappointed. In 1862, an Ashanti chief offended against the laws of his country and, with some of his followers, fled across the Prah to escape punishment. Thereupon the king of Ashanti sent an embassy to Governor Pine at Cape Coast demanding that the fugitives should be surrendered. Some authorities state that there was an agreement between the British Government and Ashanti that such runaway criminals should be given up. This is not quite certain, but, in any case, the British and the Fantis did not look at the question in the light of any such agreement. They thought only of the cruel tortures and death which would be inflicted on the fugitives if they were handed over to the vengeance of the Ashantis. For this reason they declined to comply with the request, whereupon the Ashantis at once made

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preparations for war. In these preparations they were assisted by their old friends, the Elminas, who forwarded to them large consignments of powder and guns.

The long period of peace, since 1826, had led the British to think that war was a thing of the past. They no longer maintained the watchful policy of Governor Maclean, although the then Governor proved himself to be an equally brave man when the struggle came. The Denkeras whom Maclean had settled in the districts to the north of Elmina arrested the carriers who were conveying ammunition to Kumasi and sent word to the Governor. But so little did the British anticipate war that they actually sent back orders to the Denkeras that the arrested carriers should be released and allowed to go on. When persistent rumours of warlike activity on the part of the Ashantis reached them, they contented themselves with sending to Kumasi, Ansa, one of the Ashanti princes who had been sent to England for education and who had settled in Cape Coast as a merchant. This man was instructed to make enquiries of the king as to what his intentions were. He did not return but remained to give help to his own countrymen.

In 1863 a large army of Ashantis invaded Fanti territory in three divisions. The invaders were fully prepared and had collected a great store of ammunition, and acted on a carefully thought out plan. One division marched to the west to attack the Denkeras and Wassaws. Another, to the east,

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had for its objective Akim and Accra. The central division was to attack Fanti. The British authorities, for the reasons mentioned above, found themselves quite unprepared. They had hoped not to have to undertake a serious war again. Moreover, the money which was to have been raised by the poll-tax had disappointed expectations. In a few years the income from it had dwindled away to nothing. As a consequence no money had been available to procure sufficient ammunition or to train armed soldiers, so that when war actually came, the Government was not in a position to fulfil its promise of protection according to the ordinance of 1852.

A native force was hurriedly raised and placed under the command of Major Cochrane, assisted by a few small companies of the second and third West India regiments and the Gold Coast Corps. The officer in command, realising the weakness of his untrained and undisciplined crowd of soldiers thus hastily gathered together, feared to give battle to the enemy and retreated before them. The Ashantis advanced without encountering any resistance and destroyed many towns such as Asikuma and Bobikuma, devastating the country between those towns and Akim-Swedru. Governor Pine, when he learnt of the retreat, joined the army under Major Cochrane, and endeavoured to rally it to make a stand, but all in vain. The rains came on and the triumphant invaders retired to their own country leaving small companies of soldiers as garrisons in some of the towns. The British Governor was so

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chagrined at the failure to oppose, let alone to defeat, the Ashantis that he fell ill and was carried to Cape Coast almost dead.

Urgent messages were despatched to England explaining the situation and asking that an army should be sent out sufficiently strong to conquer the Ashantis and so prevent the peace and prosperity of the country from being again destroyed and the hopes of so many quiet years frustrated. This project, however, had to wait ten years before it was finally carried out. All that was done, at the time, was to send out more West Indian troops. These arrived in separate sections, small in number, entailing a long delay before they could all be gathered together in order to advance into the country. The season proved to be exceptionally unhealthy, and a large number of the new soldiers fell ill and died. The Gold Coast Corps, also, behaved so badly that it had to be disbanded, and in the end no invasion of Ashanti took place.

When the people in England heard of the many deaths through sickness and of the failure of the Fantis to provide their proper share of the expenses of government they began to think once again that it was not worth while to risk so many men in defence of a country which had so greatly disappointed their hopes. Some influential men began to advise, as in 1830, that the country should be abandoned. This was not done, but the Fantis were told that, in future, they must do more for themselves. The country was governed by a new arrangement

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according to which it was placed under the Governor of Sierra Leone, who had also oversight of the Gambia and Lagos. The local officer in charge was to be called an administrator and it was considered that this was the first step towards final retirement.

This new arrangement naturally created much dissatisfaction and caused some of the Fanti chiefs to think that they had made a mistake in submitting to British rule and to imagine that it was time to assert their independence. The authority of the Government sank to a low ebb and it seemed as if the high moral prestige which had been won for the British name by Maclean was lost. This was especially shown by events in the east. The Awunas, instigated by a native, called de Lema, who had himself been a slave, began to make attempts to revive the slave trade. They attacked the Addas who called upon their allies, the men of Accra, to come to their aid. They did not call in vain. The Government also sent assistance in the shape of a West India regiment. A volunteer regiment was also raised by the combined efforts of two English merchants, Irvine and Clayton, and two Accra gentlemen named Bannerman. When these forces took the field, however, a conflict of authority arose. The African soldiers did not know whom they had to obey, their own native leaders or the English officers. At last an agreement was arrived at and an advance made. A severe engagement with the enemy was fought near the river Toji, in which the Awunas

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were eventually routed completely. Had there been unanimity between the allies and their English helpers the war might have been ended at once by the pursuit of the flying foe. Owing to the weakened authority of the British officers this was not done and the Awunas being allowed to escape still continued their defiance. In this they were aided by the Ashantis who, doubtless, perceived in the change which had taken place in the prestige of the British, an opportunity of regaining their former power over the port of Accra and, perhaps, thought that at last they would realise their ancient ambition of the command of the entire sea-board.

CHAPTER XIV

CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT

THE weakening of British authority at this time was entirely due to misunderstanding between the rulers of Great Britain on the one hand, and the Fanti peoples under their protection on the other. The British had not anticipated that the government of the country would make such large demands upon them in either men or money. They could not understand why people dwelling so near together as, for example, Cape Coast, Elmina and Kommenda should live in constant enmity with each other. Indeed many found it hard to understand why war should be so continuously recurring between Ashanti and Fanti, so unreasonably and apparently so hopelessly. On the other hand the Fantis, to whom the reasons for these divisions and quarrels were obvious and real enough, thought that the British ought to do more for them. They did not realise the vastness of the empire of Britain and how heavy were its burdens and expenses. They imagined that they were being treated with great indifference and even neglect. The result was considerable friction between the two parties

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Seeing that the management of the coast was becoming so expensive, the British determined to make certain rearrangements in order to raise sufficient money to meet the increasing cost. The poll-tax which had been agreed to in 1852 had not been successful. Many persons evaded payment and frauds were committed to such an extent that the tax produced less and less money until at last it ceased altogether. The Government was therefore compelled to raise money by imposing customs dues. The difficulty in this plan was caused by the Dutch who held Elmina and part of Accra. They would not agree to exact the same dues and much smuggling was the consequence. In order to remedy this, the rulers of Great Britain and Holland came to an agreement whereby a rearrangement was made of the parts of the coast which they each held. The Sweet River which enters the sea between Elmina and Cape Coast was to be the boundary. That part of the seashore west of the river was to be in the hands of the Dutch while the English were to administer all that lay to the east. This plan meant that the English were to hand over to the Dutch the towns of Kommenda, Sekondi, Dixcove, Apollonia, Wassaw and Denkera, and, in exchange for these, receive Mori, Kormantin, Appam and the Dutch part of Accra.

No great trouble was experienced in the transfer of the Dutch ports to the British on the east. The fort of Crève Cœur at Accra lowered the Dutch flag and that of Great Britain was hoisted in its place

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without any outward sign of displeasure and the fort became known as Ussher Fort, which name it still bears in honour of the officer then acting as administrator. The other Dutch forts were also transferred peaceably. These events took place in 1868.

But it was quite otherwise with the peoples living west of Elmina. When the Wassaws, Denkeras and Kommendas heard of the proposed change they were filled with consternation and stubbornly refused to be put under the Dutch flag. The British had made a mistake in not consulting them and they rightly objected to being disposed of as if they were mere pawns in a political game. No doubt, if they had been consulted beforehand, their attitude would have been just the same. The real root and ground of their objection was the fact that Elmina, where the seat of the Dutch Government was, had always been friendly with Kumasi and they feared that for them to come under the Dutch would mean, in the end, submission to the hated Ashantis. In this objection they were strongly supported by the Fantis.

The outcome was great confusion. The Fantis regarded the British as having forsaken them and declared that they were being handed over to slavery. In this opinion, no doubt, they were confirmed by their knowledge that the Dutch had never thoroughly suppressed the slave trade. The Dutch were in the habit of acquiring slaves from Ashanti and exporting them to act as soldiers in Java and other parts of the

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Dutch Empire in the East Indies. It is true that promises were made to these slaves that after a period of service they would be allowed to return to Africa, but everyone knew that very few ever came back.

Before long, fighting broke out. The Elminas were only too pleased to think that the Kommendas were now to come under their power and eagerly assisted the Dutch in their effort to take the town. The Kommendas put up such a determined resistance that the Dutch bombarded and destroyed the town, whereupon the inhabitants fled to the bush. Moved with indignation at the fate of their allies, the chiefs of Abura, Assin, Denkera, Wassaw, Anamabu, Mankesim, Winneba, and Gomoa, met in council at Mankesim and formed themselves into an association which they called the Fanti Confederation. They sent a message to the Kommendas encouraging them to resist, and set out to their help. This they did by laying siege to Elmina and cutting off its food supply. At first, in obedience to the wish of the British administrator, Mr. Ussher, the people of Cape Coast held aloof from the quarrel. But as the people of Elmina took every opportunity to attack their farms they at length joined in the siege.

This distracted state of things was regarded by the Ashantis as affording them an excellent opportunity to recover their lost overlordship. As it happened they themselves were in no better condition and consequently they were unable to avail them-

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seives of the opportunity. Violent discord prevailed at that time within the Ashanti kingdom. Their peaceful monarch, Kweku Dua I., had died in 1867. Before his death the old king had nominated his grandson as his successor. But the council of chiefs considered the boy too young to be king at the time, as there had been several quarrels among the leading families and a strong, experienced ruler was needed, who would know how to impose his authority upon the turbulent and unruly spirits of his captains. They therefore elected one of the uncles of the heir to occupy the vacant stool. Thus it was that Kofi Kari-Kari became king.

Another event ensued by which the dissension between the Ashanti chiefs was still further increased. By a strange custom, on the death of a king of Kumasi any member of the royal family was allowed to kill any citizen whom he wished. Usually the unfortunate person killed was a slave, but on this occasion one of the royal princes took the opportunity to shoot a nephew of the leading general of the Ashanti army. This brought about a bitter quarrel which almost ended in civil war. The result was that the forces of Ashanti were divided and it was not until two years had passed that they could again act together. Even then the offended general, Asamoa Kwanta, refused to take part in anything which the army did.

When, in 1868, the Ashantis did move towards the coast, the leadership was given to a man of most cruel and bloodthirsty character named

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Akyempon. This general had to take a westerly route owing to the opposition offered by the Fanti Confederation and he reached the coast to the west of the river Tano. From there he marched along the shore to Elmina committing many savage outrages on the way. By so doing he succeeded in making the Ashanti name more hated than ever. Although his progress was unhindered, yet he did more harm to the Ashanti cause by his cruelty than if his army had been defeated.

Meanwhile another Ashanti army had been sent to the coast under a much wiser general, Adu Boffo. This army was intended to help the Awunas and Akwamus in their quarrel with the Accras. It met with a certain amount of success yet it did not succeed in its chief aim which was to take Accra. To the surprise of the Ashantis they found an unexpected antagonist in the Krepis who joined forces with the Accras against the inland tribes. The Krepis were a small nation, but were skilfully led by an heroic chief of Akim origin, named Domprey. It is said that Domprey beat Adu Boffo in no less than fifteen battles, although owing to the smallness of his army he was never able fully to conquer the much larger Ashanti forces. Nevertheless, by his spirited attacks he successfully thwarted them from achieving their main purpose. Domprey was slain at Abotia in 1870. The story of the struggle of this lion-hearted hero against the overwhelming numbers of his enemy would form a thrilling tale. His name ought to be more celebrated

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than it is. A marble slab may be seen in a house in Nsawam bearing the simple legend—

DOMPREY

In other countries a public monument would have been erected to his memory so that future generations might learn of the undaunted courage of their ancestors. As it is, not many people know even of the existence of this tablet hidden away in an obscure house.

During this campaign the Ashantis captured several Europeans. The first of these was Mr. Simpson, the administrator of Accra, who had ventured, somewhat rashly, into the country of the Akwamus in order to persuade them to make peace. For a time he was in imminent danger of being put to death, but respect for the power of England caused Boffo to set him at liberty. Later on some German missionaries, Mr. and Mrs. Ramseyer, with their infant son and a Mr. Kuhne, were captured at Anum, and sent in captivity to Kumasi. A French trader named Bonnat, also shared the same fate. The prisoners were subjected to great hardships on the way, and the little child died.

While these things were taking place in the east and west, trouble was brewing in the central districts. The chiefs of the Fanti Federation were drifting towards a rupture with the British. The Federation had been formed to assist those tribes who did not wish to be transferred to the rule of the

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Dutch. Later on, some ill-advised men, who were able to read English, inferred, from some statements which appeared in English newspapers, that the government of England intended to abandon the coast. The experience of these men was an illustration of the proverb that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. They knew how to read, but not enough to understand the full meaning of what they read and, in their ignorance, they reported to the chiefs that Great Britain was about to leave them to their fate, and the chiefs, thus misled, naturally began to act as if they were to govern themselves through the Federation without any reference to the officials at Cape Coast. These proceedings caused an estrangement to spring up between themselves and the administrator, Mr. H. T. Ussher.

So far removed were the British from any intention of retiring from the coast that, in 1869, they began to consider how to bring the whole of the sea-board under their control so as to be able to regulate the customs duties. It was found that the Dutch were willing to give up their possessions in West Africa, and, in 1872, these were ceded to the British, who paid nearly £4,000 for the stores left in the ports.

Warned by the disturbances which had arisen over the proposed transfer of the British possessions to the Dutch in 1868, careful enquiries were made as to whether the new change would be acceptable to all concerned. Most uncertainty was felt regarding the attitude of the Elminas and accordingly special

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enquiry was made touching this point. The Dutch declared that there would be no opposition, and the chief of Elmina, speaking on behalf of his people, apparently agreed to the change. The only person who made public objection was the king of Ashanti, who, as soon as he heard of the proposals, sent a letter to Mr. Ussher, in 1870, in which he claimed that Elmina belonged to him as he and his ancestors had received rent for the castle for nearly one hundred and sixty years. But that kind of absentee ownership could hardly be recognised by a strong power like the British. In asserting such a claim Ashanti was making the same demand as she had refused to recognise in the case of the Assins, that is, she was appealing to something which had happened in the past. All along, also, this dependence upon past events had been the weak point in the Ashanti method of rule and had been the reason for the repeated revolts of their interior provinces. One country cannot claim continual overlordship over another, while remaining all the time at home in their own country. This was the lesson of history which the Ashantis had failed to learn, but which the Fantis knew almost by instinct. The Fantis went and resided in a country and in time it became theirs. The Ashantis won a battle and then went home and expected that the conquered country would always be theirs. Mere fighting never wins a country. For example, the British rule the great country of India in which they have won many battles. But they do not stay at home and expect

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India to remain theirs and to send tribute. If ever the English leave India, then it will no longer be theirs.

Moreover, the British were assured by the Dutch Governor that the money paid to Kumasi had only been given as a complimentary present to secure the goodwill of the king and to encourage trade. He sent an ambassador named Plange to Kumasi to explain this. Plange returned in 1871, bearing with him a letter supposed to be signed by Kari-Kari and a number of his chiefs in which it was stated that his former letter claiming Elmina was a mistake. This document is now generally considered to have been a forgery. The British did not know this at the time and having sent a handsome present to the king, much more valuable than the Dutch had ever sent, they regarded the question as settled, and, in 1872, took possession of the castle and the entire coast.

During the time in which these negotiations were being carried out, efforts had been made to secure the release of the Europeans who were still in captivity in Kumasi. The notorious Ashanti chief, Akyempon, who had been expelled from Elmina was arrested in Assini and conveyed to Cape Coast Castle where he and the son of Adu Boffo were held as hostages. Thinking that peace was now secured and trusting to the Ashanti king's promise, the British set Akyempon and Boffo's son at liberty, and, opening the roads, allowed the Ashantis to import anything they wished. As in 1863, so now,

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even the importation of war material was not hindered by the British, in ignorance of the fact that it was intended to be used against themselves. So peaceful were their intentions.

The Ashantis, however, were determined on war, and made extensive and secret preparations. They fully understood, now that the British had the whole sea-shore in their possession, that this would be their last opportunity to assert their dominion over the coast. In addition, they were deeply wounded in their pride at the loss of Elmina, which was their last foothold on the shore. The British offered to pay twice the annual sum paid by the Dutch as a present. But it was power, not presents, tribute, not thanks which the Ashantis desired. Moreover they knew that the British would never consent to the traffic in slaves. Moved by these reasons they resolved to put forth their strength in a final effort.

Nevertheless there are some who say that the king himself was opposed to the war and that he was overruled by the more warlike spirits of his Kotoko or great council.

CHAPTER XV

THE FALL OF ASHANTI

THE final invasion of Fanti, so long prepared for by Ashanti, took place at the beginning of 1873. The campaign, although it brought passing success to the Ashanti arms, in the end brought about the destruction of their power and the fall of their kingdom. About 40,000 soldiers marched out of Kumasi. Of these only half returned at the close of the year. So great was the price paid for their short-lived victories.

According to their usual custom, the army was in three sections. That on the west marched against Denkera and Wassaw, that on the east against Akim, while the central division crossed the river at Prahsu, and had for its goal the Fanti territories. All were to converge on Elmina.

The Assins, who were first to be attacked, were not able to offer resistance and the invaders carried all before them along the Prahsu road. The British at Cape Coast had only a small force and were unable to support the Fanti chiefs who united together to defend their territories. The temporary failure of the British to back them up caused the

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Fantis to lose heart and instead of advancing to assist the Assins they held back. The Assins, thus left to bear the brunt of the attack alone, suffered a crushing defeat at Yankumasi-Assin. A belated attempt at co-operation was made at Yankumasi-Fanti, but only in a half-hearted manner, and the allied chiefs retired to Dunkwa. Here, in April, a large army of 25,000 was gathered and being attacked by the oncoming Ashantis offered a courageous opposition to their advance. In the battle neither side gained a decisive victory, though the moral benefit lay with the Fantis. The Ashantis, surprised at the unexpected resistance from those whom they had been accustomed to despise, thought it better not to advance further. A second battle was fought a week later in the neighbourhood and with the same result.

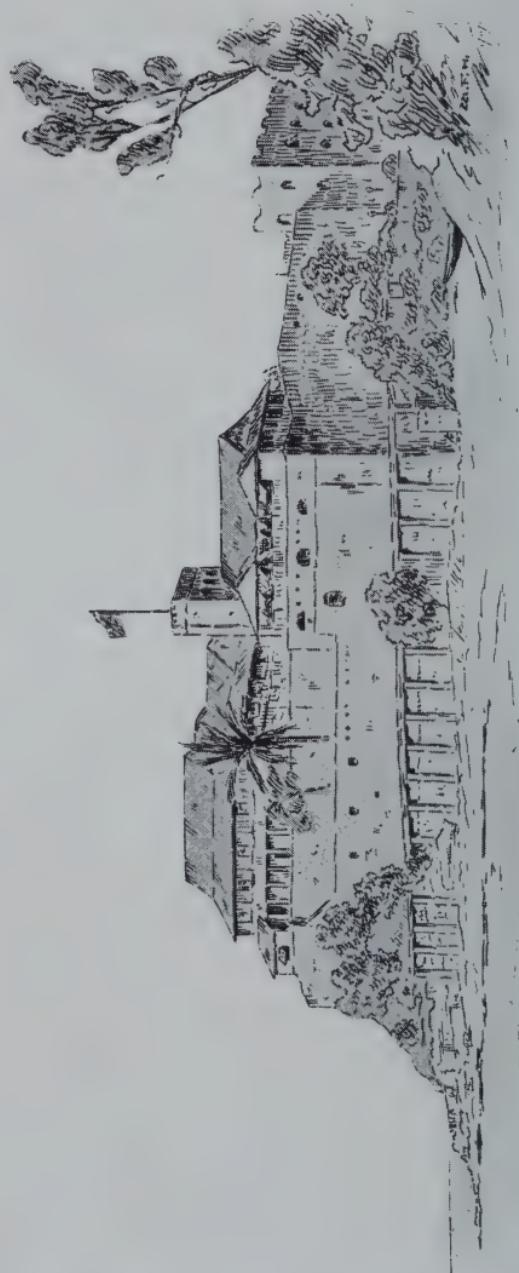
The Ashantis thereupon settled down and formed a war-camp at Dunkwa in which, as so often happened, disease soon broke out and large numbers perished of smallpox and dysentery. The Fantis retreated to Cape Coast which was filled with fugitives from the interior, and presented a scene of pitiable distress. There were not enough houses to accommodate those who flocked into the town, and hundreds had to shelter in miserable tents in the streets. Famine and pestilence prevailed and numbers died every day.

After a month's delay at Dunkwa the Ashantis struck camp and moved westwards towards Jukwa in New Denkera. Adu Boffo, who commanded

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the western division which invaded Denkera and Wassaw, had met with great success in his campaign. Crowds of captives were sent to Kumasi. He and Amankwa Tia, the commander of the central army, united their forces and at Jukwa won a great victory over the Denkeras and their Fanti allies. The Denkeras seemed to have lost their ancient fighting spirit and their chief, Kwesi Ké, showed himself to be a degenerate descendant of the brave old Kodjo Tsibu by deserting the Fanti chiefs who had hurried to his aid at his own request. The Denkeras being overcome, the barrier which the wise Maclean had set up between Ashanti and Elmina was broken through and the way lay open to the goal of the conquerors. From Jukwa they moved southward, and established themselves at Mampon and Efutu from whence they were able to obtain supplies of food and ammunition from their friends in Elmina who had all the while been secretly in opposition to the British. At the same time they cut off supplies of food from Cape Coast where the misery increased daily.

By this time the British had come to realise that the war was not a mere local faction-fight between some small tribes in the interior, but that it was a great national and well-planned struggle which the Ashantis were making against them. Having nothing but peaceable intentions towards the Ashantis, they had thought that the Ashantis would have the same towards them. Consequently they were caught unprepared for war on a large scale and



CHRISTIANSBORG CASTLE.

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were compelled to watch the invader overrun the whole country. Hurried messages were despatched to England asking for help. Reinforcements began to arrive, but at first in such small numbers that no strong movement could be made against the triumphant enemy with any hope of success. There was nothing to be done but suffer in patience and wait until larger forces could reach them from England. In the meantime, however, some marines from a war-vessel were landed at Elmina, and by a skilful manœuvre a severe punishment was inflicted upon a section of the Ashanti army which had, greatly daring, ventured to occupy part of the town. That part of Elmina lying between the river Benya and the sea, was bombarded from the castle and completely destroyed. The Ashantis were driven out with the loss of several hundreds killed. To this day very few buildings are to be found in that part of the town to the west of the castle.

This defeat of the Ashantis on the very sea-shore of Elmina, marked the turn of the tide. They had received so sharp a lesson from the British guns, that they never attempted to enter Elmina again. They had never faced British cannon before, and it is probable that the impression made upon them on that day remained with them and was one of the reasons why they gave way so rapidly before the British when the latter, in the following year, invaded their country and destroyed their capital. They remained in ignorance also of the weakness of

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Cape Coast and left it alone. Their position in their own camp began to be very unhappy on account of the heavy rains and outbreak of sickness. So deplorable became their condition that a request was sent to Kumasi begging permission to return to their own country. This permission was only granted after a long delay. The king in his reply reminded the war-chiefs that it was they, not he, who had decided for war and that they must not return without complete victory. Thus it was not until December that the army, greatly reduced in numbers and almost crushed in spirit, broke up the camps at Mampon and Efutu and began its retreat to the north.

In the interval, under the direction of the British, while waiting for the help which was on its way from England, preparations were made to inflict retaliation for the injury wrought by the invasion. The road from Cape Coast to the Prah had been reoccupied, and when the Ashanti leader attempted to use that road on his homeward march, he found it closed against him. A large body of Hausas, also, under the command of Captain Glover, had been despatched to the east with instructions to increase their numbers by enlisting Accras and Akims, and by marching through Akim to threaten the rear of the retreating enemy. Very probably it was news of this movement that induced the unwilling ruler at Kumasi to recall his army.

A few days before the retreat commenced there arrived in Cape Coast a distinguished English

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general, Sir Garnet Wolseley, accompanied by a large number of officers. His coming was a sign that the British Government was at last awakened to a sense of the seriousness of the situation. Sir Garnet's instructions were to organise a native army, if possible, and by their means drive back the Ashantis to their own country. But, in case he found himself unable to raise such an army, several regiments of British soldiers were kept in readiness to follow him, as it was now determined to put an end, once and for all, to the constant warfare. This, of course, the Ashantis did not know. Hitherto they had only seen Englishmen as officers and had never met an army of white men. They imagined that they would still have only to fight with Fanti soldiers and, therefore, when the British general sent a letter to the king of Ashanti, the Ashanti commander did not forward it to his master, but replied to it himself, saying that he was not fighting against Englishmen, but Fantis, and that if they would give up Akim, Assin, Denkera and Wassaw, there would be peace. It is significant that in this reply of Amankwa Tia's, no mention was made of the Ashanti claim to Elmina. The crushing blow which they had sustained before the castle, had disposed of that question, and it was never mentioned again.

Amankwa Tia, finding the Prahsu road blocked by strong Fanti camps, set his men to cut paths through the forest parallel to the main road, until he came to a point beyond the positions occupied by

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the Fantis. In this retreat he showed that he possessed gifts of generalship deserving of much admiration. Although he was hampered greatly owing to the number of sick men which he had on his hands and by the constant Fanti attacks on his rear-guard, yet by skilful management and planning he succeeded in extricating his army from the perils that beset it, and, crossing the Prah, he arrived in his own country before the end of the year.

As soon as it was known that the Ashantis were across the frontier and that the immediate danger was over, the Fanti chiefs became very indifferent to the requests of Wolseley to form an army and invade Ashanti. Thinking only of the present and with no foresight of the future, they regarded all serious danger at an end. For this they have been severely criticised and charged with cowardice. But it should be remembered that organised invasion of another country had never been the Fanti method. Their whole history shows us that their habit was that of peaceful penetration, and it is matter for careful thought as to which method, the peaceful way of the Fantis or the warlike mode of the Ashantis, is likely in the long run to win more lasting results. Furthermore, their past experience of the British methods was hardly such as to assure them that now at length there was a real determination to crush the Ashanti power.

Whatever the reason, the British commander found that he could only get together a small force of native soldiers, altogether insufficient to achieve

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his purpose of carrying the war into the enemy's country. Wolseley had no intention of repeating the error of Sir Charles McCarthy, fifty years before. He was fully aware of the strength of the enemy, and by means of scouts, he and his officers acquired as much information as possible concerning the nature of the country through which he meant to pass. As the Fantis responded so feebly to his summons, he sent to England for the British soldiers which had been promised him, and by January, 1874, three strong regiments were landed in Cape Coast. Careful preparations had been made for these by making a broad road to Prahsu, and by forming eight rest camps on the way. A bridge was also constructed across the Prah. In a short time, so quickly as to astonish and dismay the Ashantis, the British were across the river. From Prahsu, Sir Garnet sent a letter to the king demanding the immediate release of the European prisoners and the payment of 50,000 ounces of gold to defray the expenses which the British had had to incur for the expedition. He also announced his intention to proceed to Kumasi to draw up a treaty of peace. If the king granted his demands he would come as a friend ; if not, then as an enemy and Kumasi would be destroyed.

Besides the British regiments which were then entering Ashanti at Prahsu, there were other smaller forces of native soldiers which were converging on Kumasi from the east and west. Sir Garnet knew of the customary method of the Ashantis to invade

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the southern districts by three war routes, and to counter these he had arranged for Captain Glover to march by the east through Akim with his Hausas and Captain Dalrymple to go through the western area. The latter was not successful in raising any native helpers and had to rejoin the main army before it reached Kumasi. The eastern column also, under Captain Glover, met with many hindrances and did not reach Kumasi until after the British had left it. Nevertheless it rendered some effective service and contributed to the success of the campaign as we shall see.

The king replied to the message of the British general by sending one of the Europeans, but at the same time asking that the army should not advance any further. Wolseley regarded this as an evasion, and as an attempt to gain time. He therefore pressed on without delay. The Ashantis hastily raised a new army to oppose his progress. That the Ashantis realised their danger was shown by the fact that they composed their own internal feuds and gave the command of the army to the general who had been so greatly offended at the beginning of Kari-Kari's reign. This general was Asamoa Kwanta, their most trusted war-chief. Now, however, it was too late. They had to deal with a foe such as they had never met before, and one who amazed and bewildered them by his rapid movements and who overpowered them by his superior arms.

Notwithstanding this, the Ashantis fought most

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bravely and Asamoa Kwanta showed a high degree of skill by the way he placed his men. Two battles were fought, one at Amoafu and the second at Odasu. They were both hotly-contested struggles, but the Ashantis were each time defeated and driven back. The British general now increased his demands and asked, as a condition of his not advancing to the city, that the queen-mother and Prince Mensa, the next heir to the throne, should be sent to him as hostages. These, in the eyes of the Ashantis, were the most important persons in the kingdom, and the British did not know that it was not in the power of the king to surrender them and at the same time retain his throne. The pride of the Ashantis was touched to the quick and they resolved to resist to the last. But they were baffled by the quick movements of the British and, losing heart, they gave way and dispersed.

The road was now open to the capital, and Sir Garnet, having made careful arrangements, determined to make a swift rush for the town, and he entered it, unhindered, on the evening of February 4th. The king, with his councillors, had fled, but messengers were sent after him requesting him to return the next day and make a treaty. Sir Garnet promised that no harm would be done either to him or the city if he complied. The British waited all next day, but although the king twice sent word that he was coming he never appeared. Consequently the next morning the royal palace was blown up with gunpowder and the town was destroyed by fire.

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Then the British army, having accomplished its object, commenced its retreat to the Prah.

In a few days messengers were sent after them by the king saying that he was willing to sign a treaty. This treaty was drawn up and signed at Fomana (Fomina), and by it the king agreed to renounce his claim over Denkera, Assin, Akim, and even Adansi, as well as Elmina or any other place on the coast. Doubtless he was led to do this by reports which reached him of the approach from the east of the second force under Captain Glover. This force was not very large when it arrived, but it marched through the desolate city unopposed and overtook the main army on the way back to Cape Coast. The king also promised to pay a large sum of money as a fine, to encourage trade, and to suppress the practice of human sacrifices as soon as he could. Thus, in six weeks from the landing of the British soldiers at Cape Coast, the long-dreaded might of Ashanti was brought to an end.

CHAPTER XVI

EFFECTS OF THE INVASION OF ASHANTI

THE invasion of the inland kingdom and the destruction of Kumasi produced a profound impression upon both Fanti and Ashanti. The immediate result was the falling apart and dismemberment of the Ashanti empire. Just as in the old days, when the ancient kingdom of Ghana fell, the remote provinces, of which Ashanti was one, rose and made themselves independent, so, now that Kumasi had fallen, her subject provinces separated themselves and declared their independence. This happened not only in the case of far-off provinces to the north, but even the nearest and most influential subject-state of Dwabin threw off the yoke. The same course was followed by the chieftains of Bekwai and Kokofu. For a time it appeared as if Ashanti was destined to be split up into a number of small chiefdoms at war with one another.

As regards Fanti and the territories under the protection of the British, an arrangement was made whereby, in 1874, they were united and became a separate colony with a Governor of its own, instead of being placed under the Governor of Sierra Leone

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as it had been. The question of slavery was also settled definitely. The open sale of slaves had of course long ceased but the war had revealed to the British that there were many domestic slaves kept by rich people. These were not bought or sold out of the country, but lived in the families of their masters. Many persons, also, who happened to fall into debt, were accustomed to give themselves or their children to their creditors as pawns until the debt was paid. A law was now made declaring this custom illegal, although if any slave wished to remain with a master who treated him kindly, he was at liberty to do so. This law was framed so as to interfere as little as possible with the internal customs of the country. If any slave claimed his freedom he was not to be detained in bondage, and all children born after November 5th, 1874, were to be free.

Another effect was the altered attitude on the part of the Ashantis towards the British. From this time, onwards, they, as a nation, paid very little heed to the Fantis or any of the peoples on the coast. It is a common habit of persons to regard others as they think of themselves. An honourable man likes to deal with other men as honourable. A foolish person imagines that others are foolish also. The Fanti tribes, being divided among themselves, never knew what political strength was and imagined that other nations were weak also. They understood neither the power of Ashanti nor that of Britain. The Ashanti tribes, on the other hand,

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who had been united under the single rule, strong if oppressive, of Kumasi, knew something of the meaning of national strength. Consequently, they were quick to realise that the British, who had conquered them, were a strong and resourceful nation. This was apparent by the way they conducted themselves in relation to the overseas nation, as the sequel will show.

Kofi-Kari-Kari, who had been king at the time of the burning of Kumasi, was soon afterwards deposed and his half-brother Mensa was elected in his place. This step was taken by the Kotoko or national council in the hope that the revolted tribes would rally round Mensa more than they had done with Kari-Kari, to whom some of the chiefs had always objected on account of his illegitimate birth. Mensa immediately set to work to restore the broken unity of his kingdom. His task was all the more difficult in that he had to be careful in his actions lest he should offend the British authorities. The chief of Dwabin had appealed to the British to protect him as he had allowed Glover's force to pass through his territory unhindered, and for that reason had incurred the resentment of Kumasi. Mensa thought it was the wish of the British that Dwabin should be independent.

The truth was that the British cared very little about the matter. They had other things to think of, and for several years they took little notice of Ashanti being satisfied to know that the king by the treaty of Fomina had renounced his claim to Elmina

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and the other Fanti lands and that no more invasions would be made. Their attention was entirely occupied by the territories south of the Prah. Watching his opportunity, Mensa succeeded, partly by persuasion and partly by the use of force, in regaining the allegiance of the people of Dwabin, and then he expelled Asafu Agyei, the rebellious chief, and a small number of his disaffected followers out of the country. The chiefs of Bekwai and Kokofu also made their submission to him, and in three years, by 1877, the country was almost as strong and consolidated as it had ever been. Those Dwabins, who had been expelled along with their chief Asafu Agyei, were settled on some land to the north of Accra, in the district now known as New Dwabin, whose chief town is Koforidua.

The only Ashanti province which persisted in its separation from Kumasi was Adansi whose lands lay just north of the Prah. These people, however, had always been turbulent and restless, even in the old days, and the Ashantis were glad to be rid of them. Eventually they were attacked and driven across the river. Between them and Kumasi there continued to be great enmity and frequent raids were made into one another's territory. A spot is still shown near Obuasi where a long-remembered fight took place between them.

Mensa even endeavoured to reimpose his rule on distant provinces such as Gyaman, which lay to the north-west, but in this he was not so successful.

These efforts at restoration in time attracted the

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attention of the British Government at Cape Coast, but as the latter had not taken any great care to obtain correct knowledge of what had actually taken place in Ashanti much misunderstanding arose. It began to be said that the Ashantis were longing to avenge their defeat and would take an early opportunity to invade the Fanti districts. In reality there was never any thought of this in king Mensa's mind. His desire was to live in friendship with the British and he would have welcomed their help to make his own position secure over his disloyal chiefs. As they would not give him any assistance he had to rely upon his own efforts. He saw that he was faced with two alternatives. He had either to subdue his rebel provinces or else be compelled to see Kumasi sink to the position of a subordinate chiefdom, while the leadership of Ashanti passed to another. The chief of Dwabin would gladly have made himself the ruling power in place of the humbled Kumasi.

Kumasi, in times past, had exercised sway over Gyaman. While Mensa was endeavouring to recover this sway, a Gyaman prince named Owusu, who had been born in Kumasi, escaped to Elmina, where he appealed to the Governor for protection. This Owusu was an important person, as the people of Gyaman wished to be independent of Kumasi and could they have succeeded in setting up a separate kingdom they would, most likely, have desired Owusu to be their king, as he was next in succession. Knowing this the king of Ashanti was greatly

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displeased when he heard of Owusu's flight as he feared he would in time reach Gyaman and there place himself at the head of that revolted province.

An embassy was therefore sent, in 1881, to the Governor at Elmina asking that Owusu might be arrested and compelled to return to Kumasi. The Governor replied that as no crime was charged against Owusu, he could not be a party to his arrest, nor would he hinder him from going where he pleased.

It so happened that this embassy from Kumasi carried with it, as a sign of its authority, a golden axe. This was only done in accordance with one of the customs of Ashanti etiquette to show that in their eyes the occasion was one of importance. The only meaning it had to them was that they believed its presence would bring them success in their request. In this they were deceived and disappointed because, for some reason or other, the British officials mistakenly regarded it as a sign that, if the petition of the embassy were not granted them, there would be war. This erroneous idea was perhaps suggested by the exaggerated rumours which had reached their ears of the extent to which the king of Ashanti had restored the unity and strength of his shattered kingdom. They would also remember how previous wars had been waged on account of the fugitive chiefs of Assin who had sought similar protection at Cape Coast. As soon as the embassy had left and returned to Kumasi, therefore, the forts and castles were hurriedly put into a state of

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defence and there was much excitement. The expected invasion, of course, never took place. No such intention had ever been in king Mensa's mind as he afterwards carefully explained in a letter. He was only seeking the help of the British to strengthen him in his position by preventing Owusu from going to Gyaman. As a proof of his sincerity he asked the British government to accept the unfortunate golden axe as a present.

It is matter for keen regret that the British did not take any steps to make themselves better acquainted with what was really happening in the inland kingdom. They should have assisted the king of Kumasi in his gallant attempt to re-establish his authority. Had they done so, they would have gained the friendship of the Ashantis whose loyalty and good faith could be relied on, for all through their history they had never been known to be guilty of treachery. It is never good policy for one country to try to keep another in a weak state. This was soon proved to be true, to the cost of the British, by the great falling away of trade which took place in a few years time owing to the anarchy and dissension which prevailed in Ashanti.

Although King Mensa was a thoroughly patriotic ruler, yet he was not personally popular with his chiefs, even with those who had submitted to his authority. Like many men in high position he fell into the fault of abusing his privileges. He began to commit crimes, especially of adultery, against notable persons. This caused great offence,

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and at last the discontent came to a crisis. He tried to silence his accusers by causing a number of them to be massacred, but this tyrannical act only aroused deeper resentment, and in 1883 he was deposed by the Kotoko or great council of the nation.

The affairs of Ashanti now fell into a most unhappy condition. The hardly-won allegiance of those provinces which had separated after the war of 1874, was once more alienated. For some time there was no recognised head of the state. Rival candidates for the throne appeared and the chiefs took different sides. Kofi-Kari-Kari who had been deposed in 1875 was still alive and made attempts to regain his lost position. He was a man of kindly disposition and was personally popular with some of the chiefs and members of the Kotoko. The majority, however, wished to elect a young boy, Kweku Dua, a grandson of Kweku Dua I., to the vacant throne. This was the boy whom old Kweku Dua had designated as his heir in 1867. In the opinion of many Kari-Kari and Mensa were only regents, holding the throne until the coming of age of young Kweku Dua, who was only an infant when his ancestor died.

The events which followed make clear two things, the immense influence which is wielded by the elder women of the royal family of Ashanti, and the sincere desire of the Ashanti rulers to obtain the help of the British in settling their disturbed kingdom. For a time affairs were very confused. So much so that the inhabitants of Kumasi, the



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centre of government, began to desert it for other towns. The ancient capital city shrank to the size of a village. Grass grew in the wide streets and houses fell into ruin. Important chiefs such as Bekwai, Dadiasi and Nkwanta declared their independence and the prestige of Kumasi sank into contempt.

In this sad state of things it was a woman who came to the rescue. The queen-mother by her personal influence at last persuaded the chiefs to elect Kweku Dua. Requests were sent to the British authorities to send an officer to be present at the ceremony as it was thought that such recognition on the part of the British Government would help to win back the allegiance of the separated chiefdoms. No notice of these requests was taken and at last, in April, 1884, the young king was formally enthroned without the British. The hopes of revival, which were centred in him, were, however, unhappily frustrated by his death from smallpox two months later. The same month also saw the death of his predecessor and rival, Kofi-Kari-Kari. Thus once again was the kingdom plunged into confusion for lack of an acknowledged head.

In spite of the disorganised condition of affairs some of the chiefs showed commendable patriotism and care for their native land. In this the chief of Bekwai was especially distinguished. This was no doubt due to the influence of the queen-mother and also that it was from Bekwai that the first kings of Ashanti had come. Between the province of

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Bekwai and the Prah, lay the land of the Adansis who were always a turbulent people and given to lawlessness. They took advantage of the confusion to commit acts of robbery and brigandage on traders travelling on the Prahsu route to and from the coast. Hearing of this, the Bekwais raised a force on their own account and attacked the Adansis in punishment for their wrong-doing. This punishment would have been more severe, but for the untruthful appeals which the Adansis sent to the British. For a while the British were deceived by the false statements of the Adansis and sent help to them against the Bekwais in error, not knowing the real position. In the end, however, the Adansis were forced to migrate across the Prah, but from their settlements there they continued in after years to be a source of much trouble. When the British discovered the true state of affairs they arranged for a guard to protect traders passing through the territories of the Adansis.

Once more rival candidates laid claim to the vacant stool of Kumasi. These were Prempeh, brother of the late king, and Atweriboanda. The country was rent in two and almost every chief asserted his independence. The queen-mother, in despair, saw that there was imminent danger of the empire coming to an end completely and sent an imploring message to the chiefs to meet together and elect a king. They consented to do this if the British Government would support the man chosen. She therefore despatched an embassy in October,

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1884, to the Governor saying that it was proposed to place on the stool one Kwesi Kyisi who was the rightful heir by Ashanti law. This embassy remained in Accra nearly two years before any notice was taken of it. In the interval Kyisi disappeared and finally after nearly four years of sad trouble, Prempeh, a young man of about eighteen years of age, was elected in 1888, with the consent of all the important chiefs, and in the presence of a British officer. The new king, on his accession, took the name of Kweku Dua III.

CHAPTER XVII

PREMPEH

IN ordinary times Prempeh would doubtless have proved himself a capable ruler and would have sustained, with credit to himself, the ancient honour of his country. But the times were not ordinary ; great changes were taking place and the forces which these set in motion were too strong for him. He showed himself to be a man of upright character, plain and straightforward in his dealings. He fully deserved the love and loyalty of his subjects in which they, on their side, never faltered towards him even in his adversity, and he was worthy of a better fate than that which was in store for him.

The long period during which Ashanti had no recognised ruler had completely disorganised the kingdom which he inherited and a situation had grown up to which the diminished strength and resources of Kumasi were not equal. It was not only that the most important provinces such as Mampon, Kokofu, Nkoranza and Brong had fallen away. As has been said, this, or something like this, had happened on the accession of nearly every new king. In itself, this would not have foiled Prempeh

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in his task of restoring the fallen fortunes of his kingdom. Other adverse factors now began to work and these were too strong for him. If Ashanti could have been left alone by the rest of the world, he would in all probability have shown himself the equal in power and wisdom of any of his predecessors.

Under the rule of the British, the territory south of the Prah, which may now be called by the general name of Fanti-land, had settled down in comparative peace and prosperity. This made it a great attraction as a refuge for any discontented subjects of Ashanti to flee into. Formerly, when any chiefdom rebelled, the king simply made war upon it until it submitted. Now, the rebels fled across the boundary into Fanti-land, where they were secure from pursuit by the Ashanti soldiers. Some of the provinces even north of the Prah, such as Attabubu, placed themselves under British protection, and in that way separated themselves from the rule of Kumasi. This it was which in the end brought about Prempeh's discomfiture.

Nevertheless he made a gallant attempt to re-establish his authority. He regained the allegiance of Bekwai and made himself master of Mampon. That he was able to carry his arms successfully through such a difficult, mountainous region as Mampon, showed that he was no mean master of military strategy and his personal influence was such that although the defeated chief fled into Fanti-land where Prempeh could not reach him, yet,

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before long, he offered to return and submit. Even the Adansis, as we shall see later, felt his influence and repented of their disobedience. The Kokofus, perhaps the most rebellious and factious of all the provinces, were thoroughly overcome, although again the king's purpose was thwarted by their retreat across the Prah, where Prempeh's loyalty to the treaty of Fomina forbade him to follow them. Nkoranza was subdued and considerable progress was being made to bring back the Brongs to their former allegiance when Ashanti was drawn once more into conflict with the British power.

Since 1874, the British authorities had been apparently neglectful of Kumasi, and if the various provinces of Ashanti could have agreed among themselves, and have been content to trade peacefully, the British would not have hindered the progress of the kingdom towards restoration. They had no desire to crush Ashanti. On the contrary, had any other country interfered to molest them the British would have come forward in their defence. But the British empire had many colonies in other parts of the world, larger and more profitable than those in West Africa and therefore they were not eager to pay much attention to Ashanti. Yet not even Britain could stand apart from movements and changes which in those years began to take place in the outside world.

About 1885, the attention of the British was drawn to the fact that the trade on the Gold Coast

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was declining. A large part of this trade was done with the interior and the cause of the decline was the confusion and disorder in Ashanti. At first it was hoped that by waiting in patience this would right itself when Premeh had restored order in the lands under his rule. But just then, indeed a year earlier, other nations in Europe began to move and make endeavours to acquire colonies in Africa. The chief of these were the French and Germans. In 1884 there occurred what is known as "the scramble for Africa." Now the British had slowly acquired the whole of the Gold Coast and not many years before had bought out, in 1868 and 1872, the Danes from Accra and the Dutch from Elmina. They had also spent large sums of money in the past and had lost many lives in building up their position in West Africa. They would have preferred to move slowly and wait patiently as they had done in the past for their influence to spread. But these new nations were in a hurry. The Germans came to Togo-land on the east, and the French had been for some time on the Ivory Coast on the West. Both nations commenced to move swiftly inland. Naturally the British desired that the trade of the interior of the lands under their protection should come to them, but they saw that, if they waited much longer, Ashanti would be taken by one or other of these European nations. They therefore sent an embassy to Premeh, offering to take his country under their protection. They promised to maintain him in his position and

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dignity as a king, but the country would, of course, have to be governed in accordance with the laws of Britain. It would be like applying the ordinance of 1851 to Ashanti.

Prempeh was a patriot and prized the independence of his country. With indignation he rejected the proposal. Doubtless he thought that the offer of the British was an attempt to tyrannise over his people. But in this he was mistaken. What they wanted was really the right to defend him. He did not realise that if he did not submit to the British he would shortly be compelled to submit to some other European power which perhaps would not be prepared to treat him as considerately as would the British who had known his country so long. Unfortunately also, he was at that time under the influence of two men, sons of the Prince Ansa who had been sent to England in 1817. These two men had been educated in Cape Coast and knew something of English ways, but not enough to make them understand the whole situation in Europe. Misguided by these men, Prempeh raised a large sum of money and sent an embassy direct to England, refusing to deal with the Governor at Cape Coast.

The Government in England refused, of course, to have anything to do with the embassy. The proper channel of communication was through the Governor and his officials on the coast. The way in which the Ansas conducted the affairs of their badly-inspired embassy, led the British to think that Prempeh meant war. An English army was there-

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fore sent out, in 1896, and an armed expedition proceeded to Kumasi under Sir Francis Scott. To this expedition the Ashantis offered no resistance. They had never expected that this would be the result of the embassy, and were completely taken by surprise. The British were now, however, fully determined to put an end to all future misunderstanding and the king was compelled to submit. He was removed as a prisoner first to Elmina Castle, then to Sierra Leone and finally to the Seychelle Islands on the east of the continent, beyond the reach of his people. He was treated with honour and respect, and members of his family and a certain number of friends were permitted to accompany him. But he was not allowed to return until 1924, after twenty-eight years of exile.†

Thus the whole of Ashanti came under the direct rule of the British empire.

† Prempeh died in 1931.

CHAPTER XVIII

SETTLEMENT OF ASHANTI

SOON after king Premeh had been deposed, circumstances arose which the British had foreseen in connection with the territories to the north of Ashanti and steps had to be taken to settle the government of those lands. The British would most probably have waited for some years until Ashanti had fully settled down under their rule before proceeding to deal with these new districts, but they were compelled to move at once owing to the actions of two Muhammadan chiefs of the interior named Samori and Babutu. These men, especially the former, gave much trouble for several years. They were not true territorial chiefs but, gathering bands of fighting men about them, they marched hither and thither in the interior, attacking and destroying towns and capturing slaves. Samori ranged over a great extent of country, even leading his Sofas, as his fighting men were called, into the regions behind the French Ivory Coast and also into the hinterland of Sierra Leone.

The British sent one or two small expeditions against Samori in the direction of Bole and Wa,

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in one of which there was somewhat sharp fighting, two native soldiers and one Englishman losing their lives. The French, however, employed larger armies than the British and hunted Samori from place to place, though it was not until 1899 that they finally captured him.

Meanwhile news was brought that wherever the French came into contact with and defeated Samori, they claimed that town or land for their own. They were making the task of pursuing the freebooter Samori an excuse for acquiring land. This made it plain to the British that the day might come when Samori would flee into the land near Ashanti when the French would follow him and claim the country for their own. If this ever happened then the trade of Ashanti would be ruined. They, therefore, hastened to make a treaty with the French in 1898 on the west, and one with the Germans in 1899 on the east, whereby the districts of Dagati, Wa, Mamprusi, Gambaga, Salaga and part of Grunshi were recognised as belonging to Great Britain. These districts constitute what is now known as the Northern Territories, with Tamale as the chief town.

During the time that these movements and events were taking place, arrangements had been made for the settlement and government of Ashanti. A Resident was appointed in October, 1896, named Captain Donald Stewart, who proved a strong and wise ruler and soon won great respect

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amongst the Ashantis. A strong fort was built on high ground on the outskirts of Kumasi. The Government of the country was carried on through a small council of native chiefs which was presided over by the Resident. This council consisted of three members, Opoku Mensa, Kweku Nantwi and Kwami Efilfa.

The Ashantis, however, were very far from being content. They felt that in some way they had been deceived. They had been completely taken by surprise by the advance of the British army in 1896, and had never thought for a moment that their king would be taken away from them. Had they foreseen that, there is no doubt that they would have opposed it with all their might. To a military nation such as they had been, it appeared nothing short of a disgrace that they had allowed their king to depart without striking a blow. The more they thought of it the more they felt ashamed. Consequently there was deep discontent all through the land.

One evidence of this was seen in their abandonment of Kumasi. Only a few followers of the chiefs who formed the council assisting the Resident remained in the town. The people in the country villages kept themselves aloof from their conquerors as much as possible. From time to time rumours were heard that they only waited a favourable occasion to rise in rebellion and avenge their defeat. The British did all they could to pacify them by encouraging commerce

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and keeping trade routes open, but still the Ashantis refused to be reconciled to the loss of their independence. Another cause of their displeasure was the presence of large numbers of Fantis who, true to their instincts, migrated into the now open country and formed colonies in all the centres of trade, both in Ashanti and in the Northern Territories.

The Ashantis still had one possession which they greatly prized. This was the Golden Stool which the great Tutu had consecrated and which to them was the symbol of their power as a nation. This was carefully hidden and its hiding-place was a secret known only to a few persons. Unhappily some of the British officials were curious concerning this stool and made some attempts to find out where it was hidden. The angry Ashantis misunderstood this to mean that the British wished to take the stool from them. This was unlikely but, nevertheless, they were alarmed and suspicious. Hence they were ready to seize the first opportunity to begin the struggle for their lost position.

The opportunity came in the year 1900. Early in that year the Resident left the country on furlough and the Governor, Sir Frederic Hogdson, paid a visit, in March, to Kumasi accompanied by Lady Hodgson, three officers and an escort of only twenty Hausa soldiers. A few days afterwards a meeting of the Governor with the chiefs and sub-chiefs was held in front of the fort. At that

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meeting Sir Frederic made a speech which deeply wounded the feelings of the Ashantis. They were told that henceforth the supreme power was in the hands of the British and that they ought to produce the golden stool as a symbol of that power, to be used by the Governor as the representative of the Queen of England.

As a result of this speech the Ashantis felt that all hope of their king being restored to them was now taken away. No reply was made to the Governor's words and the gathering dispersed. Soon afterwards word was brought that the Ashantis were arming in preparation for war. A small number of soldiers were sent, three days later, to a village named Barri, near which it was said that the Golden Stool was hidden and where the inhabitants were collecting guns. Here it was that fighting first broke out and the soldiers had great difficulty in making the return journey to Kumasi. They had to fight the whole of the way. Both the English officers were wounded, one Hausa was killed and twenty others disabled. When the fort was reached the Ashantis closed round and instituted a regular siege.

The garrison was thus shut up in the fort while the loyal Africans, Fantis, Hausas and other traders, sought shelter immediately under its walls. Extreme suffering was endured and large numbers died of sickness and starvation. The Governor managed to send telegrams to the coast and to the Northern Territories asking for help.

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On the 18th of April, a small reinforcement of a hundred Hausas arrived from Accra, and a month later a detachment reached Kumasi from the Northern Territories, but these were too weak to drive off the Ashantis and raise the siege. They really only added to the number of those shut up in the fort and increased the difficulty of providing food. On the 23rd of June, the Governor and Lady Hodgson and most of the Europeans with the loyal chiefs and about six hundred Hausas and a number of carriers succeeded in making their escape. The rest of the garrison, consisting of three European and one African officer and one hundred Hausas, stayed behind and in spite of terrible hardship and suffering managed to hold the fort until the 15th of July, when they were relieved by the arrival of the British army.

This army had been hastily gathered together as soon as news reached the coast that the Ashantis had risen in revolt. Small detachments were despatched into the interior as soon as possible but the main force, under Colonel Willcocks, was not able to leave until nearly a month later. Many difficulties were encountered and the relieving army was several times checked in its progress by the determined opposition of the Ashantis. Three provinces had remained loyal to the British, namely Nkoranza, Mampon and Bekwai, of which Bekwai lay on the route to Kumasi. But before the army could reach Bekwai, they found the way blocked by the Adansis, who, to the surprise of everyone,

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threw in their lot with the Ashantis. Possibly they did so out of opposition to the Bekwais who had punished them in the interregnum before the accession of Premeh.

During the unopposed expedition of 1896, four years previously, the British had constructed rough fortifications at the places where they halted. The Ashantis had noticed these and now showed that they had profited by their observation by building stockades at various points across the roads. This was a new thing in native warfare, and by their help they were able to offer effective resistance. Four times the British suffered serious reverses, twice near Kokofu and twice at Dompoeasi, and it was only their determined courage that prevented the reverses being turned into disastrous defeats. After these checks they learnt how to deal with the stockades, but it was not until after nearly two months hard fighting that Kumasi was reached and the starving garrison was set at liberty.

The capture of Kumasi did not bring the rebellion to an end and Colonel Willcocks found that he had still to reconquer practically the whole country. This proved to be no easy task as the Ashantis fought with great courage and determination. Kokofu was destroyed as well as many strong stockades on the various roads outside Kumasi at such places as Intimide and Ejisu. This was done, however, only at the cost of severe fighting and much loss of life. The bravery of the Ashantis called forth the admiration of the British, and they

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caused it to be proclaimed that if the Ashantis would surrender they would not be punished as rebels but forgiven and treated honourably. Only those who had committed acts of deliberate murder would be punished. Thereupon many chiefs surrendered, but many still held back and the war had to be continued. Dinası was captured and at last the Ashantis made a final stand at Aboasa on the last day of September. For a long time they held their ground and endured the heavy fire of the British. Three times did the latter charge them with rifle fire and bayonets, but with no success. It was only when the attacking force began to work round to their rear, that the Ashantis began to fear that their retreat would be cut off and then, seized with panic, they broke and fled, leaving large numbers of dead and wounded on the field.

They now acknowledged that they were beaten, and the whole nation submitted to their conquerors. The promise of the British to pardon them was honourably observed and the people soon settled down in peace.

CHAPTER XIX

THE GATES OF THE FUTURE

THIS peace has continued unbroken during the first quarter of this century and to all appearance the days of strife are ended. An era of unexampled prosperity and progress has set in and a career seems to be opening out for the country as a whole, such as surely was hardly dreamed of by the fathers of the present generation. So far-reaching are the changes which a few years have seen that those who only knew the country before 1900, would find it difficult to recognise the scene once familiar to them. Towns then wearing the appearance of a jumble of houses are laid out in wide, regular streets. Stately buildings are springing up where once were none at all, or on the site of what were then poor houses of wood or mud. Ports are thronged with ships for whose cargoes great wharves and piers have been constructed. And at Takoradi, by a fine engineering feat, a harbour has been formed, alongside whose quay ships may actually lie and discharge and load their freights without the risk and injury of the deterrent surf.

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The progress of the country may be observed under three aspects, produce, roads and education. In each of these there has been such advance as to amount almost to a revolution.

Formerly the chief wealth of the land lay in its gold and palm-oil. These are now quite secondary in importance. The Gold Coast has become the chief cocoa producing country of the world. Many benefits have no doubt been brought to the land by outsiders, but it is pleasant to think that the introduction of the cocoa-plant was due to the foresight and enterprise of a native of the soil. Mr. Tete Kwashi of Akwapim observed in 1898 that the cocoa-bean flourished in the Portuguese territories further south, and obtaining some samples he planted them on his own farm with success. The missionaries at Akropong perceived the possibility of the new venture and developed it still further. More and more farmers began to cultivate the new plant, encouraged by European firms, and by 1905 the amount exported was about 7,000 tons. But in 1927 the amount had reached the astounding figure of 209,000 tons.

In 1915 it was discovered that there were large deposits of a very valuable mineral called manganese. Of this 4,000 tons were exported in 1916. But in 1927 this source of wealth had risen to nearly 370,000 tons. Other valuable objects such as sisal-hemp are being developed. The raising and exporting of these and other articles, together with the handling of the goods imported in return

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for them, has created a commerce whose value at all the ports is now over 1,071,000 tons. How small in comparison seem the few hundred thousand pounds of even the good days of George Maclean !

The face of the country has almost been transformed by the making of roads in well-nigh every direction. In the latter months of 1903 the first railway-train reached Kumasi from Sekondi, travelling through the richest gold and manganese area. Twenty years later Accra and Kumasi were also connected by rail, making a total length of nearly 400 miles. Other lines are in prospect. The advent of the motor-car and the development of cocoa plantations have led to the improvement and extension of broad motor roads, which reach almost every corner of the land. Of these there are now over 5,000 miles. Instead of the painful journey by bush tracks to Kumasi, which used to occupy weeks, it is now possible to reach the inland city by either rail or motor-car in twelve hours. Kumasi itself is a centre from whence radiate main roads, north, south, east and west, which are the channels of a constantly flowing stream of merchandise and passengers.

The extension of the road system is naturally causing much intermingling of the tribes and is bound to bring about a fusion of the various elements out of which there will surely rise a homogeneous nation unified in national spirit, ideals and language.

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Of greater import than the increase of material wealth is the change in the habits and outlook of the people which has ensued, especially in Ashanti. From being a nation whose chief pride was in war and military prowess they have come to see the value of work. The hoe has taken the place of the spear and the soldier has become a peasant farmer. So profound was the revolution and the apparent reconciliation of the people to the new state of things that in 1924 it was found possible to allow Nana Premeh to return from exile to his native land though not again to rule.

For well-nigh a century, Christian missions have striven to impart the gifts of education to which the people have responded by a demand almost beyond the power of the Churches to supply. In ever-increasing numbers both men and women have proceeded to Europe, as well as America, for higher education and qualified themselves for professional careers in law, medicine, engineering and other callings. In the work of preparatory teaching the Government has accorded increasing help both by money grants in aid and by schools of its own.

It may be that much of the educational work has not been done according to the best methods. This has been due to several reasons, some of which are obvious. One has been the overwhelming demand for education however superficial. Such great numbers flocked to the schools that real teachers in sufficient numbers were not

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available. Those who were forthcoming found themselves faced with a situation in which there was little or no time to think, and the process became mechanical. Another defect was the too slavish imitation of things English and, above all, the neglect of the natural medium of instruction—the native tongue. It is astonishing to think that educationists ever deprecated the use of the vernacular !

Now, however, there is likelihood of a better state of things. Under the leadership of a progressive Governor, Sir F. G. Guggisberg—a great institution on an adequate scale was started at Achimota. All true lovers of education, and of the African, must wish well to this great enterprise and trust that the methods followed there will be a worthy and fruitful model, one which will bring the growing minds into constant touch with reality and make learning not merely a mechanical reproduction of facts acquired, but a living spring of wisdom, and a firm foundation of sterling character.

The old conditions are passing away. Many are asking what is to take their place. The answer to that is not easy to set out in few words. At present the task would seem to be that of clearing the ground so that a new structure, free from warping influences, may be built up in the open light of day.

Many still cling to the past and lament its passing. But these are unthinking people, like those of

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Assin and Mankesim of old. Even the old kings of Kumasi had better insight and were actuated by a different spirit. Feeble and intermittent their light may have been, but they followed it. They looked to the future and left off mere dreaming of the past. They did not sin against the spirit within them—hence the reward of leadership which came to them.

Some seem to find their ideal in antagonism and opposition to the European. That is mere negation and, after all, is simply a perverted form of imitation. Negation and imitation effect nothing.

Those who would lead Africa to a worthy life, and mode of expressing that life, must find some positive spiritual principle, and create institutions and customs which will adequately embody such positive spiritual principle. Here is the task. Neither reversion to the past nor perversion of the present will succeed.

The characteristic tree of Africa is the palm, a tree which needs sunlight to come to fruition. In the past, most of these trees have had to climb high in order to reach the unobstructed air and light because of the dense undergrowth about their roots and stems. By the time it has reached the light it has become weak and unstable, covered with parasites, and the labour of harvesting the fruit has often been so great as to make the harvest hardly worth the trouble. The life of those who lived on the fruit has been, in consequence, kept mean and poor.

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But now it is found that if the ground around the palm is kept clean and free from undergrowth the tree grows sturdy and strong, the leaves attain the light earlier and the fruit is more easily and economically reached. Then tree, fruit and farmer are the better. Is there not here a parable? Let all undergrowth of superstition and suspicion be cleared away, so that the African character may grow in the clear sunlight of truth and sincerity. Then the fruits of African life will become more worthy and of more value than all her gold and merchandise.

If a suggestion may be offered as to what the positive spiritual principle should be, I would say it is this: Those who would lead Africa should be eager to serve. True leaders are not those who ask first that assured positions of authority be found for them. They rather create opportunities for work, being guided by the significant needs of their day. The school to which this book is dedicated has for its motto: "Dwin hwe kan." Let those who read think on these things with an eye to the future and act accordingly. Then to them will the gates of possibility open, giving entrance upon a fair inheritance.

APPENDIX

1.—THE TREATY OF 1831.

THIS treaty referred to on page 129 was signed by George Maclean, Governor of Cape Coast Castle and British Settlements, on behalf of His Majesty the King of England, and by Princess "Akianvah" and Chief "Quagua," on behalf of the King of Ashanti, as well as by "Aggery," King of Cape Coast, "Adookoo," King of Fanti, "Amonoo," King of Anamabu, "Kudjoe Chibboe," King of Denkera, "Ossoo Okoo," King of Tufel, "Animinee," King of Wassaw, "Chibboe," King of Assin, "Ottoo," Chief of Abura, and others.

The treaty was described as "a Treaty of Peace and of Free Commerce between ourselves and such other chiefs as may hereafter adhere to it." Its words are:—

"1. The King of Ashantee having deposited in Cape Coast Castle, in the presence of the above mentioned parties, the sum of 600 ounces of gold, and having delivered into the hands of the Governor two young men of the royal family of Ashantee, namely, 'Ossoo Ansah,' and 'Ossoo In Quantamissah,' as security that he will keep peace with the said parties in all time coming, peace is hereby declared betwixt the said King of Ashantee and all and each of the parties aforesaid, to continue in all time coming. The above securities shall remain in Cape Coast Castle for the space of six years from this date.

"2. In order to prevent all quarrels in future which might lead to the infraction of the Treaty of Peace, we, the

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parties aforesaid, have agreed to the following rules and regulations for the better protection of lawful commerce.

“ The paths shall be perfectly open, and free to all persons engaged in lawful traffic ; and persons molesting them in any way whatever, or forcing them to purchase at any particular market, or influencing them by any unfair means whatever, shall be declared guilty of infringing this Treaty, and be liable to the severest punishment.

“ Panyarring, denouncing, and swearing on or by any person or thing whatever, are hereby strictly forbidden, and all persons infringing this rule shall be rigorously punished ; and no master or chief shall be answerable for the crimes of his servants unless done by his orders or consent, or when under his control.

“ As the King of Ashantee has renounced all right or title to any tribute or homage from the kings of Denkara, Assin, and others formerly his subjects, so, on the other hand, these parties are strictly prohibited from insulting, by improper speaking or in any other way, their former master, such conduct being calculated to produce quarrels and wars.

“ All ‘ palavers ’ are to be decided in the manner mentioned in the terms and conditions of peace already agreed to by the parties to this treaty.

“ Signed in the Great Hall of Cape Coast Castle this 27th day of April, 1831, by the parties to this Treaty, and sealed with the Great Seal of the Colony in their presence.”

Here follow signatures and marks.

2.—THE BOND OF 1844.

“ Bond, 6th March, 1844.

“ I. Whereas power and jurisdiction have been exercised for and on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, within divers countries and places adjacent to

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Her Majesty's forts and settlements on the Gold Coast ; we, chiefs of countries and places so referred to, adjacent to the said forts and settlements, do hereby acknowledge that power and jurisdiction, and declare that the first objects of law are the protection of individuals and of property.

" 2. Human sacrifices, and other barbarous customs, such as panyarring, are abominations, and contrary to law.

" 3. Murders, robberies, and other crimes and offences, will be tried and enquired of before the Queen's judicial officers and the chiefs of the districts, moulding the customs of the country to the general principles of British law."

This was signed by the King of Denkera, the Chiefs of Abura, Assin, Donadie, Domonassie, Anamabu and Cape Coast. It was also signed by Quashie Ankah, as well as by H. W. Hill, Lieutenant-Governor, George Maclean, J.P., and Assessor, F. Pogson and S. Bannerman.

Later in the year the signatures of the Chiefs of Dixcove and Lower Wassaw were added.

3.—THE ORDINANCE OF 1852.

" 1. That this meeting, composed of His Excellency the Governor, his council, and the chiefs and head men of the countries upon the Gold Coast, under British protection, constitutes itself into a legislative assembly with full powers to enact such laws as it shall deem fit, for the better government of those countries.

" 2. That this assembly be recognised by Her Majesty's Government as legally constituted, that it be called the Legislative Assembly of native chiefs upon the Gold Coast, that it be presided over by His Excellency the Governor, who shall have the power to assemble, prorogue and adjourn it at pleasure ; and that its enactment, sanctioned and approved by the Governor, shall immediately become the law of the country, subject to the approval of Her Majesty

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the Queen, and be held binding upon the whole of the population being under the protection of the British Government.

“3. That this Legislative Assembly being thus duly constituted, having taken into consideration the advantages which the chiefs and people derive from the protection afforded them by Her Majesty’s Government, consider it reasonable and necessary that the natives generally should contribute to the support of the Government by submitting from time to time to pay such taxes as may be determined upon by the majority of the chiefs assembled in council, with His Excellency the Governor.

“4. That it appears to the chiefs at present assembled in council, that the most productive, the least burdensome, and the most equitable tax which in the present state of the country can be levied, would be a poll-tax upon the gross amount of the population enjoying the protection of the British Government.

“5. That entertaining the views here expressed, the chiefs and head men do, for themselves and their people, voluntarily agree to pay annually to the Government the sum of 1s. sterling per head, for every man, woman, and child residing in the districts under British protection.

“11. That the revenue derived from this tax, after payment of the stipends of the chiefs and other expenses attending its collection, be devoted to the public good in the education of the people, in the general improvement and extension of the judicial system, in affording greater facilities of internal communication, increased medical aid, and in such other measures of improvement and utility as the state of the social progress may render necessary, and that the chiefs be informed of the mode of its application, and entitled to offer such suggestions on this point as they may consider necessary.”

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